Brandywine, Niles earn spots in state baseball rankings
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Buchanan's Langston-Weiss a finalist for City Clerk of the Year

By PMG STAFF

BUCHANAN — The City of Buchanan has announced that City Clerk Kalla Langston-Weiss has been selected as one of four finalists statewide for the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks' City Clerk of the Year award.

This honor recognizes outstanding service, leadership and dedication to municipal government across Michigan.

LANGSTON-WEISS

Langston-Weiss has served as Buchanan's City Clerk since 2021 and brings more than a decade of experience in local government, including previous roles as deputy clerk and administrative assistant to a township supervisor.

"Being named one of four finalists for City Clerk of the Year is a tremendous honor," Langston-Weiss said. "I am grateful to serve the residents of Buchanan and to work alongside a team dedicated to excellence in local government."

City officials praised Langston-Weiss for her professionalism and forward-thinking approach. Mayor Mark Weedon also commended Langston-Weiss for her impact on the community.

"Kalla exemplifies the very best of public service," Weedon said. "Her dedication, integrity and commitment to our residents make Buchanan proud and we are honored to see her recognized at the state level."

"She approaches her responsibilities with a focus on what is best for the City and the community, rather than limiting her perspective to what is strictly her job," added City Manager Tony McGhee. "This mindset, combined with her strong work ethic and commitment to service, makes her an invaluable asset to the City of Buchanan."

The City Clerk of the Year award recognizes clerks who demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism and service within the profession. The recipient will be announced at the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks Annual Conference in June.

Photo provided

A group of Niles students earned a FFA state championship in Ag Issues at the 98th Michigan Future Farmers of America State Convention last month. From left: Louisa Peterson, Gavin Dandurand, Adolfo Sanchez-Perez, Alexis McCombs, Natalie Chester, Zarrah Dyer, and Zosia Olivia.

Niles students win top honors at FFA event

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A group of Niles students took home top honors at the 98th Michigan Future Farmers of America State Convention last month.

Louisa Peterson, Gavin Dandurand, Adolfo Sanchez-Perez, Alexis McCombs, Natalie Chester, Zarrah Dyer and Zosia Olivia earned a FFA state championship in Agricultural Issues against the best FFA students from around the state.

"That moment was extremely nerve-wracking for me," said Niles Agriscience Educator & FFA Advisor Emma Rauch. "This is my first year teaching at Niles, and this is my first team. My goal this year really was just to get a team to State. My predecessors had a very good reputation, and I didn't want to ruin that. I had to keep the momentum going. Since the beginning, they really worked. As we got closer to the announcement, all I kept replaying in my head was how well they did when they presented. That room was dead silent; they had the crowd captivated the whole time. I've never seen high school students speak so well before.

"I wanted it for them because they put in all the work. We practiced almost two hours every day."

The convention represented more than 127 chapters and welcomed more than 2,500 members and guests. Held March 4-6, it showcased the best from Michigan's next generation of agricultural leaders. The team advances to the FFA National Convention to be held October 21-24 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Student attendees competed in 11 Leadership Development Events, visited the State Capitol, voted on constitutional amendments, were recognized with hundreds of awards, and celebrated another year of premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

Students who participated in Ag Issues performed a skit detailing an agricultural issue. These skits are between ten and fifteen minutes in length and allow students to showcase their creativity in props, dialog as well as knowledge.

"This contest involves finding a hot topic or a controversial topic current to Michigan agriculture and creating a presentation about it," Rauch said. "They debate both sides, highlighting the pros and cons and essentially posing the question of whether the topic is good or not. They realized that many people are withdrawn from the ag community, so a lot of these decisions are made by stakeholders who may not be directly related to it. People see things from different sides, and we try to capture those perspectives. The students take on individual roles, both within and outside of ag, to portray the relevance of the topic."

Rauch said the team's topic was agrivoltaics, the practice of using the same land for both solar energy and agriculture.

"We had to research and prepare them to answer anything: local zoning laws, animal health, soil health, and even the contracts farmers sign with solar companies," Rauch said. "All my free time for about three months was spent thinking about solar panels. We even met with industry professionals, like solar panel reps, to get firsthand experience and verify what we were reading."

For Rauch, watching her students learn, present and form their own opinions on agrivoltaics was a rewarding experience.

"When you tell high schoolers they are doing a topic on solar panels, no one is initially excited," Rauch said. "But by the end, they all had an appreciation for it. Some still don't know if they agree with them, while others have formed strong opinions on whether they belong on farmland. Being able to form those opinions is important… It gave them an outlet not only to use their voice but to believe in themselves. It's a hard contest. From that first day to the state performance, they became a completely different team – mature and confident. I can see that carrying over into their everyday lives."

Rauch hopes the students' success on the state level is appreciated by the community.

"For the program as a whole, it shows the community what is out there," she said. "Not many people look into the importance of public speaking for high schoolers. It shows there are great options outside of athletics. Even if you aren't directly related to agriculture, we have a home for you here at FFA. Being able to show that at different levels says something to the school and the community."

Niles City Council approves three Riverfront Park festivals

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — Riverfront Park will once again be a popular destination this summer for residents and visitors alike.

The council voted 4-1 to approve a trio of agenda items concerning the park, which included moving forward with annual events such as Riverfest, the Niles Bluegrass Festival and Jesus Fest. The three events are organized by the Riverfront Optimist Club. Council members Charlie McAfee, Sheila Koebel and William Weimer were absent.

Riverfest will take place from Thursday, July 30 through Sunday, Aug. 2 at the Riverfront Park Amphitheater and will feature music, carnival rides, games and food and craft vendors. The annual festival serves as a fundraiser for the growth and development of the festival. The city will close various streets and parking lots, provide police and fire services, electric and water usage, use of Riverfront

See **FESTIVALS**, page A8

Buchanan sewer and water rates expected to increase

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Correspondent

BUCHANAN — Water and sewer rates are expected to rise again this year as well as years into the future. That was consensus after a consultant's presentation at Monday night's Buchanan City Commission.

Consultant Andy Campbell of Bendzinski & Co. municipal finance advisors presented the results of his company's water and sewer rate study at Monday night's meeting. The study was done over the last several months, looking at the water and sewer projects scheduled to be done as well as the rates required to do that work.

Campbell said that while the city has made progress in addressing water and sewer infrastructure needs in the city-especially on the sewer side, more work needs to be done. He estimated it could cost between $17.5 and 21.4 million over the next nine or ten years to just complete needed water system improvements including replacing lead service lines.

"You've made a lot of progress, especially on the sewer side, but there's still a lot to do," Campbell said. "A lot of work had been delayed and the costs keep going up at the same time there is a lack of grant funding."

While some state grants and federal earmarks have already been received or applied for, he said that there won't be enough funds from those sources to cover all the costs. He also noted that there is stiff competition for some of the state revolving fund grant/loan packages as communities all across the state have to complete lead service line replacements by 2037.

Campbell told commissioners that the eight percent rate hike cannot go away. "We will be seeing eight percent raises for the foreseeable future unfortunately," he said. "The capital improvement plan is still too extensive. The goal is to increase rates higher than the inflation average to catch up."

"You're still at the point you can't afford all you need to do," he said. "The city is obviously looking for grants and federal earmarks and trying to decrease the costs for ratepayers. But even with the eight percent increase, you're just keeping up with compliance and making sure the system is functioning."

He gave estimates of what the eight percent rate increases would mean for the average household bill. He said the average water bill for city residents will rise from $51.53 a month to $55.65 a month. The average monthly sewer bill will

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Lake Michigan College announces Dr. Ken Flowers as new President

FLOWERS

BENTON HARBOR — Lake Michigan College announced Monday that Dr. Ken Flowers assumed the role of President Saturday, April 11.

Dr. Flowers will serve on a three-year contract with an annual salary of $222,000.

LMC officials stated that Flowers brings a deep commitment to higher education and a longstanding connection to Lake Michigan College. Having dedicated his career to the institution, he steps into the presidency with a clear vision for advancing student success, strengthening workforce partnerships and expanding access to high-quality, affordable education across the region.

"I am honored to serve as President of Lake Michigan College and to continue the important work of empowering our students and communities," Flowers said. "LMC has long been a place where opportunity meets support, and I look forward to working alongside our talented faculty and staff to build on that foundation. Together, we will continue to innovate, grow, and ensure that every student has a clear pathway to their future."

As part of the leadership transition, Dr. LaToya Mason has been appointed Interim Provost. Mason currently serves as Dean of Health Sciences and brings extensive academic leadership experience, a strong commitment to student achievement and a deep understanding of workforce-aligned programming. Faculty, Nursing and Director of Nursing Denise Gardner will serve as Interim Dean of Health Sciences during this period, providing continuity of leadership within the division.

"Dr. Mason is a respected leader whose expertise and dedication to student success make her exceptionally well-suited for this role," said Dr. Flowers. "Her leadership will be instrumental in ensuring academic excellence and continuity during this transition."

Flowers succeeds Dr. Trevor Kubatzke, who has served as President for the past nine years and will transition to the role of President Emeritus. Under Kubatzke's leadership, Lake Michigan College expanded academic offerings, strengthened community and industry partnerships and enhanced its role as a cornerstone of opportunity in southwest Michigan.

"It has been a privilege to serve Lake Michigan College and the communities we support," said Dr. Kubatzke. "I am proud of what we have accomplished together and confident that Dr. Flowers will continue to lead the College forward with integrity, vision, and a deep commitment to student success. The future of LMC is in excellent hands."

Kubatzke will continue to support the College during the transition period through December 2026.

SMC Speaker Series celebrates 250 years of military women

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

PRUETT

Women's patriotic desire to serve is as old as America itself, but it took decades for their service to gain official recognition.

In 250 years from 1776 to 2026, women served in unofficial capacities during the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.

Women provided official service in both World War I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War era, Desert Storm, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and the Middle East.

June 12 will be the 78th anniversary of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act signed into law by President Harry Truman on June 12, 1948. Public Law 625 was landmark legislation which let women pursue military careers.

Many states, including Michigan, formally recognize women's military service by proclaiming June 12 as "Women Veterans Recognition Day."

"Women were there from day one" in the fight for American independence from Great Britain, Laura Ritchie, adjunct professor at Jackson College told Southwestern Michigan College's Academic Speaker Series April 14. "They weren't enlisted, but they followed the Continental Army as nurses, serving meals, mending clothing and washing uniforms. They performed critical tasks and logistical support that allowed soldiers to focus on fighting. Some even cleaned cannons – an extremely dangerous job."

The Revolutionary War lasted from 1775-83. Deborah Sampson, a Massachusetts woman, disguised herself as a man and fought for 17 months, was wounded twice in combat and was awarded a full military pension.

Margaret Corbin fought alongside her husband John defending Fort Washington in northern Manhattan. She took his place firing a cannon when enemy fire killed him.

During the Civil War (1861-65), women's involvement was even more substantial, with 20,000 supporting the war effort. An estimated 1,000 women disguised themselves as men and fought on both sides. Women served as nurses, including Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross in 1881, and Dorothea Dix, who championed humane treatment of the mentally ill.

Harriet Tubman, whose network of safe houses known as the Underground Railroad rescued slaves, also organized spies for the Union.

Official recognition came during the Spanish-American War period (1898-1901), when 20 nurses of 1,500 who signed government contracts succumbed to typhoid, malaria and yellow fever.

"Women had proven their value on the battlefield and in hospitals," Ritchie said. "Attitudes began to shift."

In 1901, Congress established the Army Nurse Corps. More than 30,000 women served in World War I (1917-18); 12,000 as Army Nurse Corps nurses. The Navy and Marines let women enlist for the first time. Almost 12,000 served as yeomen (clerical workers) and telephone/radio operators. This service led to the women's right to vote with the 19th Amendment of 1920.

Some 350,000 women served in World War II (1939-45), including 60,000 Army nurses and 14,000 Navy nurses. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and Women's Army Corps (WAC) were created in 1942 and in 1943; 150,000 served in England, France, Australia, New Guinea, the Philippines and North Africa.

The Navy created WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service). More than 84,000 women served, including intelligence and codebreaking.

The Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) saw more than 1,000 civilian women fly missions.

Sixty-seven Army nurses were captured by the Japanese in the Philippines and held as prisoners of war for nearly three years. Maj. Ella Daringer performed 230 surgeries and delivered 13 babies while imprisoned. There were 432 women killed in the line of duty and 88 taken as POWs.

When the draft ended in 1973, the transition to an all-volunteer force opened opportunities. In 1976, the military academies – West Point, Annapolis, Air Force – admitted women.

The Women's Army Corps disbanded in 1978 and integrated into the regular Army. Women began graduating as fighter pilots and combat aviation officers.

Ritchie, a former heavy construction equipment mechanic, and Rhea Pruett, Chief Warrant Officer Five (Retired) Army, visited SMC as Michigan ambassadors for the 1997 national Military Women's Memorial in Arlington, Va.

The Military Women's Memorial incorporates as its façade the historic Hemicycle, a retaining wall dedicated in 1932 as part of the Memorial Bridge project.

"More than 3 million women have served this country," Pruett said, "with about 1.6 million still living in our country or still serving in uniform. It's located near the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery.

"I served nearly 40 years with the Army and the Michigan Army National Guard, retiring in 2014. I was 18 when I entered basic training at Fort McClellan, Ala.," Pruett said.

Pruett said more than 350,000 women are registered with the Military Women's Memorial, preserving their stories, "which is barely 10 percent of those who served. It costs nothing to register and means so much by honoring her service. Every woman who has served and sacrificed in defense of our nation made history that deserves to be told. We shine a light and make them visible. When you're visible, you cannot be ignored."

FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7700 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

- Kindness is addictive.
- Start promoting those summer jobs for our high school kids.
- There is nothing good that comes from AI.
- Vaccinations save lives! Don't be fooled by those who say crazy things to try to be relevant.
- Time to take down those Christmas lights.
- Niles and Brandywine have teams ranked top 10 in the state. Check out a game if you can and support these teams.
- More info on data centers, please.
- Congressman Walberg, tell us where you stand on this unlawful war. What are your plans to make life affordable in our area, and how do you intend to stand up to lunacy coming out of Washington?
- Hats off to the Dowagiac girls soccer team on keeping the Chieftain Invite trophy home.
- This is not what people voted for.
- Another successful Blossomtime pageant is in the books. Congratulations to the new court and thank you to everyone who made it possible.

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OBITUARIES

Jackie Coffinger

December 16, 1941 – April 7, 2026

Jackie Lee Coffinger, age 84 years, formerly of Niles, Michigan; father, grandfather, honorable Veteran, ceramicist, and Nintendo bowler died peacefully at 11:04 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital in Saint Joseph, Michigan, a bit unexpectedly, but of natural causes.

Jack really liked his caregivers at the hospital – especially the nurses – and his family appreciates those who were present at his death. He was born on December 16, 1941 in Niles to Thomas J.L. and Alice Louise (Orrick) Coffinger who affectionately chose the name "Jackie", a name for which Jack had less affection, and avoided all his life.

He graduated with the class of 1959 from Niles High School, and enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served in the Quartermaster Corps at the former Dow Air Force Base in Bangor, Maine, and was honorably discharged after fulfilling his four-year obligation. He returned to Niles, and was first employed in shipping and receiving at the former Niles plant of Kawneer, later moving to the former Niles plant of Simplicity Pattern Company where he worked in the book bindery department until retirement in 2003.

He continued to live in Niles until moving to Edwardsburg, Michigan in 2006. Jack had a great interest in ceramics, and enjoyed molding, painting, and firing ceramic artwork. He and his wife established a studio in their home, producing a variety of items, including a special piece which won local awards and competed at the Michigan State Fair.

He enjoyed completing jigsaw puzzles, playing cards with friends, and listening to country music classics such as Loretta Lynn. He had become quite successful at Nintendo Bowling, which greatly amused his grandchildren; and always had a pet dog, including his favorite, "Dozer," and his current pet, "Honey" who survives. His greatest joy was his family. On December 20, 1969 at Saint John's United Church of Christ in Niles he married the former Priscilla Arvilla Robertson with whom he celebrated the forty-eighth anniversary prior to her death on March 28, 2018.

He was also preceded in death by his father, Thomas Coffinger and mother, Alice Farris. Surviving family includes his children, Katherine Swanson of Niles, Martha (& Bryan Lee) Steinhoff of Edwardsburg, and Benjamin (& Angel Lewark) Coffinger of Dowagiac, Michigan; grandchildren, Nicholas Swanson, Becky Coffinger, Bobby Steinhoff, Curtis Steinhoff, Josh Steinhoff, Elizabeth, (& Ryan) Young, Dessaray Lee, Abbie Coffinger, Megan Coffinger, Zoie Coffinger, and Miley Coffinger; and great-grandchildren, Nichole, Addison, Anna, Maison, Alexis, Nikko, Kaiya, and Kaleesia.

The family of Jack Coffinger will gather privately to celebrate his life and share memories. Jack had prearranged his services at the Halbritter-Wickens Funeral Home, 615 East Main Street in Niles, who is honored to serve his family and fulfill his request. Online condolences and memories may be left at: www.halbritterwickens.com Psalms 90:10 suggests that we might live to be 70, or by strength 80, and Jack exceeded that, clearly enjoying life by caring for others.

He served in the military, and then was a productive member of his community at two of Niles' greatest companies. He enjoyed sitting at the ceramics bench, and the jigsaw table, and card table, likely always with a radio playing a country music station. But more important was the people sitting across the table, sharing those experiences and those conversations; especially when Priscilla was next to him, and when his children and grandchildren were in the room.

Deven Vaughn

September 8, 2001 – April 12, 2026

Deven Wayne Vaughn, age 24 years of Niles, Michigan; son, brother, uncle, RV worker, football player, and fun friend died unexpectedly at 12:23 p.m. on Sunday, April 12, 2026 with his family gathered around his bed at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital in Saint Joseph, Michigan.

His family is grateful for the efforts of the first responders and hospital emergency staff, and more so for Deven's strong will to survive until everyone was present; and then to leave, so that no decision was needed.

He was born on September 8, 2001 in South Bend, Indiana to Stephanie Nickole Vaughn, and attended both Niles and Brandywine schools, where he was a great football player. He was employed in RV manufacturing, in plants producing Forest River RVs, Thor Motor Coaches, and NeXus RVs. An important part of his work ethic on the production line was keeping track of the number of tasks completed each day.

Deven continued to enjoy playing football, initiating pick-up games all the time, and always carried a football to his visits to Silver Beach on the shore of Lake Michigan, near Saint Joseph, although never barefoot, even in the sand. He also enjoyed cookouts at home and in the neighborhood, and other social games such as cornhole and beer pong. Music was always playing in the background, sometimes country music, or rap, or female pop artists with whom he would sing-along, generating some mockery and laughter from those within earshot.

The laughter and attention of those around him was a great motivation for his goofy jokes and antics, often answering a dare to do something, or simply a "Hey, watch this!" He also enjoyed time indoors, although still competing in football through the video series of "Madden NFL," and other sports offered through "2K." In some quiet moments, instead of picking-up a fidget-spinner, he found comfort and focus by rubbing textiles between his fingers, and his mother recalls evidence in an ultrasound examination that Deven's fingers were active even before he was born.

His family was his greatest joy, especially his mother, of whom he affectionately named "Momma Dukes." He is survived by his parents, Stephanie & Billy Mitchell of Niles; grandparents Tom & Ellen Vaughn and Cheryl & Tom Mitchell, all of Niles; Deven's brother, Brock (& Anna Jasper) Vaughn of South Bend, and sister Kaidence (& Isaiah Reyes) Liska of South Bend; step-brother Michael (& Seirra Holden) Hoadley, and step-sisters, Brittany (& Aaron Patterson) Mitchell, and Kortney (& Johnny) Gamble, all of Niles; Deven's 2-month-old nephew, Beaumont Vaughn, and niece, Amelia, who is estimated to be born on Deven's next birthday; and by a great circle of amazing friends.

The family of Deven Vaughn will receive relatives and friends on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Halbritter-Wickens Funeral Home, 615 East Main Street in Niles. At 4:00, three members of Deven's family will share memories. Committal will be private, at a later date, at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Buchanan, Michigan. Online condolences and memories may be left at: www.halbritterwickens.com.

Twenty-four years feels far too short to us, but it was a lifetime for Deven, and he was busy every one of his 8,983 days (plus those 9 months that his mother sensed his busyness). Playing football in school, and becoming a productive member of his community; entertaining friends, and continuing to compete – even if virtually; but more importantly, he loved those around him, and felt the love returned, especially from his siblings and the next generation – for whom he was deeply excited, and above all, the special love between mother and son.

Death notices

Virginia Mae (Powell) Lusk, age 91, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, passed away on April 8, 2026. Local arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home to get her home to Pennsylvania. www.Allred FuneralHome.com.

Sabra Ferenczi, 84, of Niles, passed away on April 10, 2026. Funeral services will be at Community Church in Edwardsburg on Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 11am, visitation beginning at 10am. Interment Mission Hills Memorial Gardens. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Jennifer Ann Kupfer, 74, passed away on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, in St. Joseph, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

John L. Jozo, 75, of Hamilton, Michigan, passed away on April 12, 2026. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Kenneth Dale Chastain, 72, passed away on April 13, 2026, surrounded by the love of his family. Arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Services to be held at Allred Funeral Home on Friday April 24 at 12:00 noon. www.Allred FuneralHome.com.

Wanda Joan (Wilson) Clausen, 91, of Berrien Springs, passed away on April 14, 2026, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Services to be held on Sunday April 19 at Village Seventh-day Adventist Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan. www.AllredFuneralHome.com.

Delores Curran

February 9, 1931 – April 8, 2026

Delores Genieva Curran, 95, of Elkhart, Indiana, passed away peacefully at home on April 8, 2026, surrounded by her four daughters. She was born on February 9, 1931, and lived a life marked by quiet strength, grace, and deep devotion to those she loved. Delores had a kind and caring nature and a warm smile that brought comfort to those around her. Even at 95, she maintained a smooth, youthful complexion that reflected her natural beauty and gentle spirit.

On June 30, 1951, she married the love of her life, Donald E. Curran, at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Niles, Michigan. Together, they built a life full of love, family, and adventure, sharing over seventy years of marriage.

Delores worked at Simplicity Patterns in Niles, Michigan, and later as a bookkeeper for a local carpet cleaning business, where she was known for her reliability and dedication. She was a woman of strength and independence who loved her family in her own steady and meaningful way.

She enjoyed collecting heart-shaped rocks, seashells, and driftwood, as well as line dancing, gardening, and watching old westerns. She was also an outstanding fisherwoman and hunter who wasn't afraid to get her hands dirty. She will be remembered for her strength, her resilience, and the love she carried for her family.

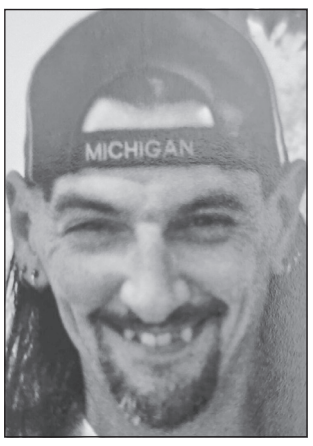
She is survived by her four daughters, Joanne Lubelski of Elkhart, Indiana, Constance Curran of Elkhart, Indiana, Donna (Donald) Lange of Ludington, Michigan, and Kelly Anne Russell (Michael Leavens) of Whitefish, Montana; along with twenty-three grandchildren, twenty-one great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Donald E. Curran; her parents; her son-in-law, Donald F. Lubelski; and her grandson, Ryan Patrick Lubelski.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated at St. Mark Catholic Parish in Niles, Michigan, on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., with visitation beginning at 10:00 a.m. An interment will follow at Mission Hills Memorial Gardens. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneral HomeNiles.com.

If you find a heart-shaped stone along your path, think of her – she will forever be in our hearts.

William Merwin

May 7, 1971 – March 28, 2026



William Orrin Merwin, 54, of Dowagiac, died Saturday, March 28, 2026. Arrangements have been entrusted to Clark Chapel – Starks Family Funeral Homes. Cremation has taken place and the family will be holding a private Celebration of Life, in his honor.

William was born May 7, 1971, in Dowagiac to Danny and Claudette (Dudley) Merwin. On May 11, 2013, he was united in marriage with Veronica Ross. William worked for Thor Motor Coach for 7 years, where he was awarded, "Most Valuable Employee". He was known for his great sense of humor and as being a good family man, husband and dad.

His most cherished times were spent with family, his wife, and son, Torry. William enjoyed music, watching the San Francisco 49ers and fishing with family. Finally, it must be mentioned he was known for his Batman obsession, follower of Michigan football and for being a Nascar enthusiast. He will be missed by all who knew him.

William is survived by his son – Torry Merwin; wife – Veronica Ross-Merwin; mom – Claudette Merwin; sisters – Beth (Jason) Bowers and Danette (Larry) Merwin-Payne; and brother – Derrick (Marcella) Merwin. He is preceded in death by his father – Danny Merwin. Memorial contributions in William's name may be directed to the American Cancer Society Michigan at: cancer.org/about-us/local/michigan.html.

To share a memory or message of condolence, please visit William's personalized webpage at www.clarkch.com.

Charlene Swartz

December 13, 1952 – April 4, 2026

Charlene M. Swartz, 73 of Cassopolis, died peacefully surrounded by her loved ones Saturday, April 4, 2026. Her life began December 13, 1952 in Niles, the youngest of three children born to Robert and Charlotte Bowman. She married Wally Swartz November 11, 1996 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Char dedicated thirty-eight years to the Cassopolis school system as an elementary secretary and later as the director of transportation. Her two sons remember having to pass her at the front desk if they were called to the principal's office.

She has always been a hard worker, but her children and grandchildren were her greatest joy. A grandchild was always in her home. She enjoyed having sleepovers, baking, and crafting with them. Her loved ones will remember her for her love of gardening, collecting rocks and sea glass, traveling, cooking, spending time at her family cabin, listening to Elvis, and being barefoot whenever possible.

Charlene will be greatly missed by family and friends. She survived by Wally Swartz of Cassopolis; two sons, Chad (Trisha) Knight of Niles, Brad Knight of Cassopolis; one stepson, Sonny (Veronica) Swartz of Niles, four grandchildren, Chelsea (Connor) Olkowski of Decatur, Madison Knight, Abigail Knight, and Ryan Knight; three step-grandchildren, Pearl Swartz of Dowagiac, Logan Swartz, and Luke Swartz; sister, Nancy (Dale) Gleason of Niles; brother, Wayne (Sandy) Bowman of Niles, and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, her great-granddaughter, Riley Olkowski; and her nephew, Gary Bowman.

Family and friends will gather Friday, April 17, 2026 at 11:00 am in Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, 202 North Broadway Street, Cassopolis. Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Karen Muir

August 6, 1953 – April 14, 2026

Karen Elizabeth Muir, 72, passed away Tuesday, April 14, 2026, surrounded by her family at home.

She was born August 6, 1953 to Blair and Barbara Walter. After Blair's sudden passing in 1956, Barbara married James Smallwood. James later adopted Karen.

Karen spent most of her life in Niles, Michigan. She graduated from Niles Senior High School in 1971 and was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Niles.

Karen married Skip Muir on November 10, 1979. Karen and Skip enjoyed making holidays magical, slow dancing, and watching game shows on television. They were blessed with two children, Nicole and Nicholas. Karen cherished her role as a mother. She was the anchor of the family, strong and supportive. Her baking and cooking skills were unmatched. Her Rice Krispie Krunchies were a crowd favorite at reunions and family gatherings. Karen had a way with words, from her quick wit to the beautiful poems she wrote.

Karen was overjoyed to learn she had been promoted to grandma of twin boys. With a broken heart, she guided the family through the loss of her first-born grandson. She shared an unbreakable bond with her grandchildren.

Karen is preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Kenton Smallwood and Kim Smallwood; grandson, Hayden Kimmerly; and many others.

Karen is survived by her husband of 46 years, Skip Muir; daughter, Nicole (John Kimmerly) Muir-Kimmerly; son, Nicholas (Gretchen) Muir; grandchildren, Hudson Kimmerly and Noa Kimmerly; sisters, Karol (Philip) Mazzotta and Kaye (Mike) Walker; sister-in-law, Barbara Smallwood; and a host of other family and friends. A celebration of life will be held Sunday, April 19th from 11 am to 2 pm at Milton Township Hall, 32097 Bertrand Street, Niles, Michigan. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Karen may be made to Christmas Commandos. Karen's family extends their sincere thanks to SouthernCare Hospice.

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For more information, or to submit an obituary, email obits@leaderpub.com.

leaderpub.com

Crowning achievement

Miss Eau Claire/Sodus/ Dowagiac claims Miss Blossomtime title

By TONY WITTKOWSKI
Paxton Media Group

Don Campbell / HP staff

Miss Blossomtime 2025 Ava Starbuck crowns Miss Eau Claire/Sodus/Dowagiac Taylor Costanza the 2026 Miss Blossomtime Queen on Monday night during the Miss Blossomtime Pageant held at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center. Pictured to the right is finalist Miss St. Joseph Gabi Fiesbeck.

The 2026 Miss Blossomtime Court poses for pictures Monday night during the Miss Blossomtime Pageant held at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center. Pictured from left, Miss Congeniality Maya Gonzalez, Miss Blossomtime Taylor Costanza, second runner-up Emma Birkhead and first runner-up Brianna Friedrich.

BENTON TOWNSHIP — Taylor Costanza is ready to carry on a century-old legacy in Southwest Michigan.

With streamers falling around her Monday night, Costanza thanked her family and friends for their support as she was crowned the 93rd Miss Blossomtime at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center.

"I'm really excited to be able to show others what Southwest Michigan has to offer," said Costanza, who was previously named Miss Eau Claire/Sodus/Dowagiac. "I know my family and friends were super loud tonight. So, it feels really good to have such great families and friends."

Taylor Costanza will lead a court of Brianna Friedrich of Hartford (first runner-up), Emma Birkhead of Watervliet (second runner-up) and Maya Gonzalez of South Haven (Miss Congeniality).

They'll join their male counterparts, Dominick Lignell of St. Joseph (Mr. Blossomtime), Beau Kirtdoll of Niles (first runner-up), Antonio Jordan of Berrien Springs (second runner-up) and Giovanni Ayala of Watervliet (Mr. Nice Guy), in representing Southwest Michigan, at various community events, for the next year.

"This upcoming year, I want to be as involved as much as possible," Lignell said Monday night. "I've talked with the boys already and we all want to take part in as many events as possible."

Both courts will appear as a special attraction at the Grand Floral Parade, which returns on May 9 and is now celebrating its 120th year as one of Blossomtime's signature events.

Costanza, a senior at St. Joseph High School, is the daughter of Jennifer and Brett Costanza.

"The best part of this process has definitely been the dressing room with the girls, the bonds that we have and the sisterhood that we have formed together in the last three days," Costanza said after being crowned Monday. "And while we're preparing for this, it's something that we're never going to be able to replace."

She decided to enter into the pageant back in November, "kind of on a whim."

Pageantry was something Costanza acknowledged she's never done before.

"I always love to try new things. This started months before, so we've been preparing for this moment," Costanza said in reference to herself and the other contestants. "But since the last weekend, it's been a whirlwind."

Costanza and her court emerged from five finalists, which also included Gabi Fiesbeck of St. Joseph and Kennedy Holloway of Niles.

Prior to judges revealing the Blossomtime court, Gonzalez was chosen by her peers as this year's Miss Congeniality. She is a senior at South Haven High School and is the daughter of Janet Aguero and Anthony Gonzalez.

First runner-up Friedrich is a senior at Hartford High School and the daughter of Sherry and Todd Friedrich.

"I feel so blessed that I've been able to enjoy my time with all the girls in the back and see all of these people supporting me," Friedrich said.

Second runner-up Birkhead is a senior at Hartford High School and the daughter of Angela Gendron and Kevin Birkhead.

"Thank you for giving me this confidence and opportunity to be on the stage before my community," Birkhead said.

For this year's pageant, 21 young women competed for the Miss Blossomtime title, with 28 young men vying for the Mr. Blossomtime honors.

A festive atmosphere

The color guard kicked off the festivities Monday night, followed by a rendition of the National Anthem. A glow-stick waving crowd packed LMC's Mendel Center to cheer on all 21 contestants while they represented their communities.

Emcee Lainie Lu Von Behren and her co-host, Phil McDonald, introduced the queens and clued the audience in on what contestants' preparation had entailed.

Early Saturday morning included a practice session, which transitioned into their individual interviews. After resuming their stage practice, contestants held group interviews, completed their final personal interviews with judges, and put all their work on showcase Monday night.

This year's theme was "Blossomtime ... Oh the places you will see," and featured an opening number that took audience members to another part of the world. The first part of the dance began in Paris, with a choreographed dance and phased introduction of the queens.

Each queen was eventually introduced individually, while they walked out to applause during the formal wear segment. They returned as a group on stage shortly after, taking turns at center stage.

Once the field of queens were narrowed to five finalists, they were each tasked with answering a question on the spot.

A special year

2025 Miss Blossomtime Ava Starbuck was accompanied by her court on stage partway through Monday's ceremony. Each court member gave an update on their past year representing Southwest Michigan and what the festival has meant to them.

"It truly has been the best time of my life," Starbuck said. "I've made seven best friends. We hang out all the time. I've made so many connections, and I feel like I've been able to support so many people in their lives because of this."

Bret McAtee, Lisa Bowman Walters and Steve Spears were judges for Monday's pageant, while Brandy Godush-Cox, Hunter Ackermann and Corbin Wagner handled those responsibilities for the Mr. Blossomtime pageant on Sunday.

Blossomtime Festival President Anna Abdelnour, Jeff Alisch and Anita Harner served as this year's production team, while Sydney Koenes served as choreographer for Sunday and Monday night's dancing. Harner also handled set design, while Nancy Schilling did the costume alterations.

"This year, we are celebrating our 120th year as a festival – that's very remarkable to keep these traditions as long as we have," Abdelnour said in her opening remarks. "This festival started off as a small apple tree, and then its roots grew and grew, and with the agricultural background in this part of the state, we brought you this wonderful festival and wonderful things for all the people around us."

Contact: twittkowski@TheHP.com, 932-0358.

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Michigan updates air quality alert system

By BRIAN ALLNUTT
Planet Detroit

After Canadian wildfires brought extremely poor air quality to Detroit in the summers of 2023 and 2025, Michigan is updating how it communicates air quality risks to residents this year.

The state is streamlining a system that has evolved with the emergence of severe smoke impacts. The state will issue an air quality alert anytime fine particulate matter or ozone levels climb into the federal Air Quality Index's "unhealthy for sensitive groups," or orange range, said Jim Haywood, senior meteorologist with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, Energy (EGLE).

The agency previously issued alerts when the air quality index, or AQI, was forecast for the "unhealthy," or red, range, while advisories were issued for levels in the orange range.

Haywood said forecasting models are improving, but he doesn't like forecasting smoke conditions for Michigan beyond a 24-to-48-hour time frame.

It can be difficult to predict where smoke traveling over long distances will go, and if it will affect air quality or remain well above ground-level, he said.

Haywood recommends the Environmental Protection Agency's AirNow webpage to access an air quality forecast for the next 48 hours. The EPA's EnviroFlash system provides local air quality alerts.

Paul Sancya / AP file

Shahrukh Ahmed and Hibah Khan pose on Belle Isle as haze from Canadian wildfire smoke blankets Detroit and creates poor air quality on Aug. 4.

JustAir and PurpleAir 's private air monitoring networks offer more localized air monitoring data.

A multiday forecast map for ground-level smoke that covers most of the U.S. and Canada is available from FireSmoke Canada.

Fire conditions in Canada, western U.S.

The managing director of the research partnership Canada Wildfire said he expects fewer fires north of the border than last year, but the possible emergence of an El Niño weather pattern could lead to greater fire risk in late summer in western Canada.

Drought or dry conditions are present in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, but recent storms have improved conditions in some areas, Canada Wildfire's Brian Wiens told Planet Detroit.

If an El Niño weather pattern sets in, it could lead to hot weather in Alberta and British Columbia, and greater fire risk, he said.

In the United States, officials predict a severe fire season in the West at the beginning of the summer, as every state except Michigan and North Dakota is experiencing some level of drought or abnormal dryness.

The National Interagency Fire Center's April outlook forecasts significant fire potential in much of the South and Southwest in April and May, while large portions of the West are at increased risk for wildfire in June and July.

Most of the the country should see above average temperatures while much of the West is predicted to have below-average precipitation, according to the three-month outlook from the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center.

Climate change, including increased heat and drought, has increased the risk and extent of U.S. wildfires over the last two decades, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Temperatures are above normal across nearly all of the western U.S., and precipitation is below normal, said Scott Stearns, fire warning coordination meteorologist at the National Weather Service. The drought and low precipitation could set up a more active fire season in the U.S., at least through July, he said.

Stearns expects an expansion of drought conditions in the West, adding that a possible above-average monsoon season in the Southwest could complicate the fire outlook.

Wet weather may put a damper on the fire season, Stearns said. Yet storms may also lead to lightning and new fire starts, and they can supercharge vegetation growth that dries out and becomes fuel.

The ability of especially large fires to create weather conditions that are conducive to even more fire complicates predictions, he said.

Protect yourself from wildfire smoke

Children, pregnant people, and older adults are often most at risk from air pollution, Laina Stebbins, a spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), said in a statement.

"Studies have shown that exposure to higher levels of outdoor air pollution is associated with increased emergency department visits, hospitalizations and even deaths," Stebbins said.

Wildfire smoke contains large amounts of PM2.5, which is 30 times smaller than a human hair, allowing it to lodge itself in lung cells and move into the bloodstream. It's associated with cardiopulmonary illnesses, premature mortality, and mental health issues.

The MDHHS wildfire smoke webpage recommends that residents use an air purifier to protect themselves from wildfire smoke; run air conditioning; and use a MERV-13 filter, or better, for both.

If your air conditioner has a fresh air option, MDHHS advises closing the intake. Window units are acceptable if they have tight seals between the unit and window and a recirculation mode to prevent outside air from entering the home.

People without access to an air purifier or air conditioning could consider setting up a "clean room" where levels of smoke and particulates are kept as low as possible, or building a do-it-yourself air filter with a box fan and MERV-13 air filter, according to MDHHS.

If you must go outside in heavy air pollution, MDHHS recommends using an N95 or P100 respirator marked with "NIOSH." KN95 and KF94 respirators can also be used if the first choices are not available.

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Niles man is injured after striking tree

By PMG STAFF

MILTON TOWNSHIP — A 61-year-old Niles man was injured Friday after striking a tree in Milton Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

At approximately 3:14 a.m. Friday, deputies with the Cass County Sheriff's Office were dispatched to a single vehicle crash at the intersection of Beebe Road and Runkle Street in Milton Township.

The investigation shows that 61-year-old Niles resident Cory McBain was Eastbound on Beebe R0ad, when he appeared to be having a medical issue and crashed into a tree. McBain was transported to South Bend Memorial Hospital by ambulance for injuries sustained in the crash.

Assisting Agencies in this crash were SMCAS Ambulance Service and OTEPD. The crash remains under investigation

A focus on in-home services

Area Agency on Aging hosts politicians at the Legislative Forum

By LOUISE WREGE
Paxton Media Group

ST. JOSEPH — Most people across America want to stay in their homes for as long as possible as they age.

And it is much less expensive to provide in-home services so people can stay at home than it is to pay for care in a nursing home, said speakers Monday at the 19th annual Legislative Forum and Public Hearing at the Regional IV Area Agency on Aging in St. Joseph.

However, Michigan is out of balance with the rest of the country, said Christine Vanlandingham, CEO of the Region IV Area Agency on Aging, which covers Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties.

Nationally, she said 69.5 percent of Medicaid-funded long-term care is provided through home and community-based services, with only 30.5 percent spent on care at a nursing home facility.

She said those numbers are flipped in Michigan, with only 38 percent of Medicaid-funded long-term care spent on home and community-based services through the MI Choice Waiver Program and 61.7 percent spent on nursing home care.

"In Michigan, home- and community-based services through the MI Choice Waiver Program cost $34,741 a year while a nursing facility costs anywhere from $85,000 to $130,000," she said. "So it costs less than half to provide home- and community-based services."

And yet, she said Michigan only allows 14,000 people to enroll in the MI Choice Waiver Program and once the cap is met, the rest of the people who qualify are put on a waiting list.

Vanlandingham said a lot of money could be saved if more people were allowed to choose the MI Choice Waiver Program.

She said they are asking for equity between home-based care and institutional care, which would save the state money and let people stay in their homes where they want to be.

Attending the forum were state Rep. Joey Andrews, D-District 38; Steve Carra, R-District 36; and Brad Paquette, R-District 37; along with state Sen. Jonathon Lindsey, R-District 17; and Josh Przygocki from state Sen. Aric Nesbitt's office, R-District 20.

The four state legislators at the forum said they support allowing more money to be spent on the MI Choice Waiver Program.

"We all support trying to drive choices that are going to end up saving money," Lindsey said.

He said the nation needs to rethink its priorities.

"What we collect from all of you in taxes is about half of what the federal government collects in taxes," Lindsey said. "Two years ago, I made the comment that if we just took the money that the federal government was spending on the war in Ukraine in funding these services, we'd have another $100 million just for this region. It would be generationally transformational."

He said he can make a similar statement about the current war.

"If we took the money that the federal government has spent on the war in Iran so far, we could fund this for the state of Michigan for 150 years," he said.

He said there are debates about if direct assistance programs are the right role for the government.

"But what is not a question to me is that our government funding is not adequately prioritized to serve the people of the United States right now, and it needs to be," Lindsey said.

Carra, R-Portage, said he agreed.

"As Sen. Lindsey was talking about with guns and butter, the more that we spend on perpetual war overseas, whether Ukraine or Iran, that's less resources that we have, whether it's spending on programs here in our nation or keeping it in people's pockets, and it leads to inflation as well," Carra said. "That's a hidden tax that people have to deal with – the tax of inflation."

He said nursing homes are very expensive and it doesn't make sense to spend more money on something that people don't want.

Andrews said he supports fully funding the MI Choice Waiver Program.

"It just doesn't make sense to me that we don't fully fund these sorts of programs when their impact is so high and their cost is so relatively low," Andrews said.

In addition, Theresa Uhrich, COO of the Area Agency on Aging, said they are asking legislators to support increasing access to home- and community-based services for people who don't qualify for Medicaid.

She said 6,635 older people in Michigan are on waiting lists for in-home care and home-delivered meals. She said older adults with unmet needs are five times more likely to enter a nursing home.

She said the Area Agency on Aging is asking legislators support the Silver Key Coalition's request for an $8 million increase for aging in home services and a $2 million increase for home-delivered meals, both in the Michigan Department of Health and Social Services fiscal year 2027 budget.

Uhrich said this would support the unpaid family and informal caregivers who help older residents stay in their homes.

"They're providing meals, transportation, helping with medication management and medical appointments, providing help with finances and countless day-to-day activities that keep life going for our older adults," Uhrich said. "They're often doing this work while working themselves and raising families, managing their own health needs and absorbing significant financial and emotional and physical strain."

Without them, she said the cost would be astronomical.

Uhrich said their help is even more important as the direct care worker shortage continues.

"If Michigan wants to help support older adults remaining at home, we have to first make sure we are supporting our caregivers," she said.

Paquette said the problem is lobbying at the capitol is immense.

"That is the root of the problem. That, in my estimation, is what has to change," Paquette said. "Lobbyists should be discontinued from purchasing anything for legislators."

He said some legislators say the lobbyists buying them meals and other things doesn't affect how they vote.

"Well, a $4,000 trip and $10,000 in free meals, I think, has a huge impact," he said. "I would say speaking to that, that is the root of our problem – the culture of the capitol right now – and that has to change."

Older Michiganians Day

During Senior Action Week, which starts on Monday, May 11, is Older Michiganians Day on Wednesday, May 13.

The Area Agency on Aging is providing free bus transportation to Lansing on May 13 so they can meet with legislators on the capitol lawn.

For more information and to register, go to https://areaagencyonaging.org/advocacy.

For those who don't want to go to Lansing, a watch party will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on May 13 at the Campus for Creative Aging, 2920 Lakeview Ave., St. Joseph.

Contact: lwrege@TheHP.com, 932-0361, Twitter: @HPWrege

Photos by Don Campbell / PMG

Michigan Miss Amazing Queen 2026 Kitty McClintock, a MI Choice Waiver client, talks about some of her daily challenges during the 19th Annual Legislative Forum and Public Hearing on Monday at the Campus for Creative Aging in St. Joseph.

Christine Vanlandingham, CEO of Region IV Area Agency on Aging, hosts the 19th Annual Legislative Forum and Public Hearing on Monday at the Campus for Creative Aging in St. Joseph.

Christine Vanlandingham, CEO of Region IV Area Agency on Aging, hosts the 19th Annual Legislative Forum & Public Hearing on Monday at the Campus for Creative Aging in St. Joseph.

State Rep. Brad Paquette joins state Rep. Steve Carra, state Rep. Joey Andrews, state Sen. Jonathan Lindsey and Josh Przygocki, from state Sen. Aric Nesbitt's office, during the 19th Annual Legislative Forum and Public Hearing on Monday at the Campus for Creative Aging in St. Joseph.

RATES

From page A1

go from $84.21 to $90.95.

As part of his report on the need for the two eight percent rate hikes, he went through the specific needs of the city's water and sewer departments in 2027. He estimated that $2.4 million will be needed to make water and sewer system improvements next year.

Those projects include work on Oak Street and Days Avenue as well as three parking lots. The city is expected to get $1.2 million in federal earmarks and $200,000 from a state grant with the rest coming from the sewer, water and general funds.

The city commission is expected to act on the rate increases in May before the fiscal year ends on June 30. The rate increase proposal will now go to the Joint Water Sewer Board and then to the individual governmental boards.

Monday's meeting also featured action on one new ordinance and setting the date for a second public hearing for another new ordinance. Public hearings were held on both proposed ordinances Monday with no comments received.

The ordinance approved amends the Unified Development Code zoning ordinance to provide for the short term rental overlay district approved by the commission last year. City Manager Tony McGhee said the new amendment cleans up language in the zoning ordinance to align with the short term rental rules.

The other ordinance is expected to be approved next month after a second public hearing on May 11. That ordinance provides for the regulation and rehabilitation of vacant and underutilized buildings to promote their return to active use.

McGhee said the ordinance will address the vacant and underutilized buildings used for storage in the downtown and around the city that have had a negative impact on the local economy. He said that property owners will be encouraged to activate their buildings or pay a fee. He noted that enforcement won't be "heavy handed" and that hardship cases will be considered.

Also Monday, commissioners voted to raise cemetery fees and formally accept the $1 million Revitalization and Placemaking Program grant the city received in connection with the $20 million downtown infrastructure project. With the RAP grant, McGhee said that the paperwork and due diligence for the grant was just finished recently.

A public hearing for the Downtown Development Authority plan amendment will be held at the commission's May 26 meeting. The plan amendment was completed recently by the newly formed DDA with assistance from Berrien County Community Development Director Dan Fette.

In announcements, McGhee reported that the "punch list" items for the downtown infrastructure project will be completed in the next few weeks. Those items include planning trees and striping streets and sidewalks.

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Tensions flare at Cass County Commissioners meeting

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

CASSOPOLIS — Tensions flared during last week's Cass County Board of Commissioners meeting over a public discussion regarding compensation within the Prosecutor's Office.

During the April 9 meeting, members of the county prosecutor's office expressed frustration regarding the commission's removal of a proposed step-level increase retention policy from the March 19 meeting agenda.

At the March 19 meeting, the County Policy Committee proposed re-implementing a step-level increase retention policy. The policy, which was voted down by commissioners, could have enabled the county administrator to give senior prosecuting attorney Jason Ronning a three-step increase to stay.

Per the county's current policy, mid-year step increases are prohibited. All step advances for non-union employees must occur on Jan. 1, as outlined in the wage scale approved alongside the county's adopted Classification and Compensation Study. While a 2023 resolution previously allowed the administrator to authorize mid-year advances, that authority expired on Dec. 31, 2023.

Ronning told commissioners that he plans to leave his position due to the lack of support from county officials.

"It's not about the money; it's about the treatment," he said. "There are 11 attorneys that live in this county. Why would an attorney want to come and live in this county at this point? They are being poached from other offices for more money. When we provide evidence of that, we're told it's 'he said, she said.' We are not trusted; we are not believed."

"Cass County is at very real risk of losing more attorneys in the prosecutor's office," added Cass County Prosecutor Victor Fitz. "This is not an idle threat or a comment from a prosecutor 'calling wolf.' It is a very real thing and, sadly, a likely guarantee. My hands are tied; I cannot give raises. Only you can do that. The authority and responsibility is with you. The attorneys in the prosecutor's office are regularly being approached by others trying to take them from my office, normally for much higher-paying jobs. My attorneys have been willing to stay for far less, but they need to see some effort from you to show that you value them."

Community members also spoke up in support of the prosecutor's office.

"The market is what it is," said Dowagiac resident JD Glaser. "It's not a comp study. Monica, Hope and Fitz are countywide elected officials and they're trusted. If they say they need something to retain a person, they know how their office operates, and I trust them to know what they need. I don't trust others to make a judgment on what they think they need in their office. They run their offices efficiently, and they are the most knowledgeable. Again, the market is what it is. If salaries go up $50,000 tomorrow, that's just what happens."

County Chair Jeremiah Jones opened the discussion by addressing recent personal attacks and threats regarding his leadership and the county administrator. He emphasized that while he supports law enforcement and the prosecutor's office, drawing on his 15 years as a reserve officer, he believes in professional communication over threats. Jones maintained that while he understands the needs of various departments, budgetary decisions must be made for valid reasons, noting that his leadership should not be in question given his military and elective history.

Commissioner Jim Lawrence argued that the county is failing to recognize a looming crisis in professional staffing. Comparing attorneys to skilled tradespeople, he noted that these professionals cannot be trained overnight and will leave for even small pay increases elsewhere. Lawrence criticized the board's reliance on a "class comp study," which he labeled a "joke," arguing that it fails to address the immediate need for legal staff, a vacancy he noted has remained open for a year.

Commissioner Sam Barrera responded to Lawrence's claims by defending the validity of the compensation study and the transparency of the process, which included a non-biased agency and a committee of critics. He added that employees have already received substantial raises of 18 percent to 23 percent over the last two years and questioned the sustainability of further increases, asking taxpayers and the board how they intend to fund more raises without a tax millage, especially when private-sector raises are often much lower.

Commissioner Al Northrop argued that residents and crime victims care more about having an active prosecutor's office than the technicalities of a budget study and Commissioner Tom Langley added that while he does not want to lose staff, he believes the current system fails to properly value experience and merit. He believes that pay should be based on performance and years of service rather than rigid classifications.

Tensions later rose after Fitz questioned Barrera's statistics, which led to a brief-back-and forth between the two before Jones stepped in to state that the board would not tolerate personal attacks on any commissioner or administrator.

"Making comments about other public officials is not an attack or threat," Fitz said. "I'm not threatening anybody physically, I'm not attacking Mr. Barrera. I've responded to his comments and I have the right to do that."

In response to the discussion regarding compensation within the Prosecutor's Office, Cass County Administration released a statement Monday to ensure transparency and clarify actions taken over the past several years.

The release stated that the prosecutor's office has seen increases in staffing and compensation, reflecting targeted efforts to support recruitment and retention while maintaining fairness across all county departments and offices. The efforts reflect an ongoing commitment to maintaining services for residents while ensuring equity across all county departments funded by taxpayer dollars.

The release also highlighted the county's investments and support for the prosecutor's office in recent years, including expanded staffing, implementation of career advancement structure, implementation an on-call stipend for attorneys covering weekends and holidays, implementation of a compensation review process and the utilization of the county's previous step-level retention policy for the Prosecutor's Office on multiple occasions; no other elected office has utilized this policy. The county also invested approximately $330,000 in 2022 to implement OnBase software, followed by a transition to Karpel to better meet operational

Needs, and has continued efforts to improve the physical workspace to better support daily operations and staff needs.

According to the release, there are currently two APA III positions within the Prosecutor's Office:

■ One APA III has seen a salary increase from $75,365 to $92,592, representing a 22.8 percent increase over approximately 2.5 years, not including on-call stipends or competitive fringe benefits

■ The second APA III has seen a salary increase from $72,873 to $86,352, representing an 18.4 percent increase in approximately 18 months, also not including

stipends or benefits. The increase includes a retention adjustment granted less than four months into employment.

"The County has made substantial investments in the Prosecutor's Office over the past several years, both in staffing and compensation," said County Administrator Jennifer Rentfrow. "Our approach remains grounded in fairness, consistency and long-term sustainability for all departments and offices. We are committed to supporting our employees while also ensuring responsible stewardship of county tax dollars."

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FESTIVALS

From page A1

public park and facilities.

The Niles Bluegrass Festival will take place from Thursday, May 28 to Sunday, May 31 at the amphitheater and will feature several popular bluegrass and Americana acts as well as food and beverage vendors. Jesus Fest will take place from Thursday, July 9 through Sunday, July 12 at the amphitheater and will feature Christian music from a variety of genres as well as food, arts and crafts vendors.

Fourth Ward Councilmember Michael Thompson voted against the parade request because he said he does not believe the city should contribute in-kind funds and services toward events. City Administrator Ric Huff said that the city budgets approximately $50,000 annually to assist with council-approved community events.

"The only issue I have with these is that we're taking from our neighbors to pay for these parties and that's not fair," Thompson said. "It simply isn't right to make people pay for things that they neither want nor need. It's immoral to me; just because the government's doing it doesn't make it right."

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Riverfest will take place from Thursday, July 30 through Sunday, Aug. 2 at Riverfront Park. The festival was one of three Riverfront Optimist Club festivals approved Monday by the Niles City Council.

Mayor Nick Shelton confirmed that the $50,000 budgeted for community events amounts to less than one percent of the city's annual budget.

In other business, council:

■ Authorized the emergency purchase of four Getac A140 ruggedized tablets from SHI International Corp of Somerset, New Jersey for use by the Police Department, City Administration, and Public Works.

■ Authorized the purchase of 57 mini computers and laptops from Dell Marketing LP of Round Rock, Texas at a cost of $61,466.27 to replace aging equipment throughout various City Departments.

■ Authorized the Department of Public Works to accept the bid from Great Lakes Chloride, Inc. of Grand Haven, Michigan at a cost of $1.349 per gallon, for an approximate amount of $13,494.13 for the liquid calcium chloride application on approximately five miles of unpaved city streets and waive the bid bond.

■ Authorized the Fire Department to accept a grant from Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation of Jacksonville, Florida in an amount up to $32,092.30 for the purchase of swift/ice water rescue equipment.

■ Approved the 2026-2031 Parks and Recreation Plan, as presented.

■ Approved the Memorandum of Understanding between 1" Source Bank and the City of Niles regarding the Revive Home Repair Grant Program.

■ Authorized a resolution approving Brass Alley Live, LLC's application for a Social District Permit.

■ Approved a resolution authorizing the Mayor and the City Attorney to sign the FY 2026 FTA Certifications and Assurances confirming the City's compliance.

■ Authorized DART to purchase a small bus from Hoekstra Transportation, Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan at a cost not to exceed $156,206 thru the MiDEAL program, using FTA/MDOT grant funds.

■ Approved the proposed City of Niles General Fee Schedule.

■ Approved the invoice from CivicPlus, LLC of Dallas, Texas in the amount of $3,143.89 for on-line code hosting and full-service supplementation.

■ Approved the request of Wolfshead Productions to hold the annual Niles Renaissance Faire on May 16 and 17, 2026 at Plym Park as presented.

■ Approved the request of LifePlan to conduct the Hero Run 5K/10K and one mile walk on June 6.

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Dowagiac girls soccer win the Chieftain Invitational

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

The Dowagiac girls soccer team defeated Niles and Our Lady of the Lake Catholic to win its own Chieftain Invitational Saturday.

The Chieftains defeated Niles 2-1 in the first game before shutting down OLOTL 7-0 in its second game. Johannah McDonald led the way with five goals on the day and Jimena Sanchez Ortega had two goals and one assist while Lucy Hughes added one goal and two assists.

Rylie O'Konski also scored a goal for Dowagiac.

"We played two really good games today," said Dowagiac Coach Joe Pasternak. "The girls were able to move the game offensively just the way we want to; I was very pleased with our play today. In the first game, we didn't press high enough defensively and it allowed Niles to put a lot of pressure on us in the first half. Once we started winning the battle in the middle of the field we were able to get more opportunities and score one late for the win.

"Against Lady of the Lake, we pressed high and kept constant pressure and were able to control the game from the opening minute. Overall it was a really good day. We still need to work on cleaning up some small things but I like the direction we are heading in."

Photo provided

The Dowagiac girls soccer team defeated Niles and Our Lady of the Lake Catholic to win its own Chieftain Invitational Saturday.

Brandywine, Niles earn spots in state baseball rankings

PMG STAFF

Niles and Brandywine are both ranked in the top 10 of the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association poll. The Vikings (7-3) are ranked No. 10 in Division 2, while the unbeaten Bobcats (6-0-1) are ranked No. 10 in Division 3.

Here are the rankings by division:

Division 1
1. Rochester Adams (5-1)
2. Hartland (6-1)
3. Birmingham Brother Rice (8-3)
4. Detroit Catholic Central (7-4)
5. Woodhaven (7-1)
6. Warren DeLaSalle (0-0)
7. Dexter (5-2)
8. Mattawan (5-2-1)
9. Bay City Western (10-1)
10. Hudsonville (3-1-1)
11. Midland Dow (7-1)
12. Troy Athens (11-0)
13. Okemos (4-2)
14. Howell (7-3)
15. Gull Lake (4-0)
16. Romeo (7-2)
17. Portage Central (5-2)
18. Allen Park (3-0)
19. Brighton (6-2)
20. Battle Creek Lakeview (4-1)

Division 2
1. Orchard Lake St. Mary's (4-3)
2. New Boston Huron (8-0)
3. Ada Forest Hills Eastern (3-0)
4. Pontiac Notre Dame Prep (5-1)
5. Dearborn Divine Child (5-1)
6. Spring Lake (5-0)
7. Williamston (7-0)
8. Saginaw Swan Valley (8-0)
9. Standish-Sterling (1-1)
10. Niles (7-3)
11. East Grand Rapids (2-1)
12. Yale (5-2)
13. Battle Creek Harper Creek (3-0)
14. Trenton (3-1)
15. Richmond (4-1)
16. Grand Rapids West Catholic (3-0)
17. Grand Rapids Christian (3-0)
18. North Branch (1-2)
19. Petoskey (2-0)
20. Grand Rapids Catholic Central (3-2)

Division 3
1. Traverse City St. Francis (4-0)
2. Detroit Edison (5-1)
3. Olivet (0-0)
4. Jackson Lumen Christi (1-1)
5. Monroe St. Mary's Catholic (3-0)
6. Grosse Pointe University Liggett (3-4)
7. Brooklyn Columbia Central (1-1)
8. Lansing Catholic Central (1-0)
9. Millington (3-1)
10. Niles Brandywine (6-0-1)
11. Saginaw Valley Lutheran (0-0)
12. Grass Lake (5-0)
13. Schoolcraft (1-2)
14. Whiteford (3-1)
15. Watervliet (3-3)
16. Caro (2-2)
17. Cass City (5-3)
18. Ravenna (7-1)
19. Elkton Pigeon Bayport (3-1)
20. Algonac (0-4)

Division 4
1. Portland St. Patrick (0-0)
2. Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart (8-0)
3. Kalamazoo Hackett Catholic Central (8-0)
4. Beal City (2-4)
5. Fulton (3-0)
6. Petersburg-Summerfield (3-2)
7. Vermontville-Maple Valley (5-1)
8. Marine City Cardinal Mooney (3-1)
9. Rogers City (0-0)
10. Indian River-Inland Lakes (0-0)
11. Royal Oak Shrine (4-1)
12. Harbor Springs-Harbor Light (2-0)
13. Adrian Lenawee Christian (6-0)
14. Breckenridge (4-1)
15. Decatur (2-2)
16. Norway (0-1)
17. Byron Center-Zion Christian (2-2)
18. Pickford (0-0)
19. Grand Rapids Sacred Heart (3-0)
20. Unionville-Sebewaing (1-2)

Photo courtesy of Tanya Hagen

Brandywine is ranked No. 10 in this week's Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association poll.

Brandywine's Price, Gill named D3 Honorable Mention All-State

The 2026 Michigan Sports Writers Division 3 All-State girls basketball team selected by a panel of 13 sports writers:

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Kenna Hunt, Jackson Lumen Christi

FIRST TEAM
Kenna Hunt, Jackson Lumen Christi
Lucy Young, Kalamazoo Hackett
Averie Zinn, Genesee
Angela Meggisson, Ypsilanti Arbor Prep
Natalia Laskowski, Saugatuck
Kyrah Gray, Evart
Aubrey Hiller, Manton
Addison Troska, Rochester Hills Lutheran Northwest
Skylar Ignash, Cass City
Reese Lape, Grass Lake
Taryn Roberts, Beaverton
Mylah Simpson, Saugatuck
Elly Bengel, Pewamo-Westphalia
COACH: Kevin Tringali, Saugatuck

SECOND TEAM
Ella VanDusen, Kalamazoo Christian
Danielle Smoots-Green, Flint Elite
Jayna Burmeister, Shelby
Leigh Wyman, Blissfield
Madie Folkema, Western Michigan Christian
Isabella Bennett, Cass City
Peyton Grant, McBain
Zoey Kauffman, Roscommon
Clara Groen, Plymouth Christian Academy
COACH: Scott Stine, Jackson Lumen Christi

HONORABLE MENTION
HarLee Leasher, Brown City
Normandy Geiger, Caro
Lucy Wrozek, Jackson Lumen Christi
Lily Gill, Niles Brandywine
Gabby Gaydosh, Brooklyn Columbia Central
Keaira Speihs, Rochester Hills Lutheran Northwest
Taylor Kopin, Hudson
Karlie Kimerer, Onsted
Katelyn Wendling, New Lothrop
Kelsey Kohlmann, New Lothrop
Zaya Price, Niles Brandywine
Natalie Rosel, Ravenna
Rilynn Porter, Hart
Laynee Hoffman, Kent City
Victoria Hauffe, Hemlock
COACH: Jay Riley, Caro

Niles' Favors highlights SMC basketball signings

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — It has been a busy week for Southwestern Michigan's basketball programs as several athletes from Michigan and beyond pledged to the Roadrunners.

The men's team signed Niles boys basketball standout Brayden Favors and Keithan Gilmore of McComb Community College while the women's team signed Kaylynn Taylor of Romulus Summit Academy North, Laila Collier-White of St. Catherine's in Racine, Wisconsin and Kinah Dyer of Hamtramck

Favors was named First-Team All-Wolverine and helped lead Niles to a district championship as a senior.

"Brayden is a great young man with an infectious smile and positive attitude," said SMC Me's Basketball Coach Roddell Davis. "He will be an awesome addition to the locker room. On the court, he is a dynamic 3-level scorer who can stuff the stat sheet in a hurry."

Gilmore earned MCCAA Eastern Conference Honorable Mention status with the Macomb Monarchs, who finished 10-4 in conference and 17-13 overall last season. He played in 27 games, starting 23, and averaged 7.1 points per game, 5 rebounds per game and 1.4 assists per game. Gilmore shot 46.2 percent from the field and 37.5 percent from three-point range in 2025-2026.

"Keithan brings valuable experience along with a strong leadership presence that will positively impact our locker room," Davis said. "On the court, he is a physical, versatile wing who excels at attacking the basket and finishing through contact. Defensively, he uses his length and athleticism to disrupt opponents and has the ability to be a stopper for us. He also possesses a high basketball IQ and consistently plays the game the right way."

Taylor, of Summit Academy North in Romulus, has been a standout for Summit Academy North, having been named to the All-News-Herald Girls Basketball Team

See **SIGNINGS**, page B2

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HIGH SCHOOL SCOREBOARD

GIRLS SOCCER

Tuesday's results

EDWARDSBURG 8, BUCHANAN 0

Goals — Kateland Lira 2, Shaylin Tinkham 2, Laken Wentz, Kya Shier, Kennedy Goorhouse, Jada Gaideski.
Assists – Allison Dyczko, Tinkham, Goorhouse, Gaideski.
Records – Edwardsburg 1-2.

DOWAGIAC 4, THREE RIVERS 2

Goals — Johannah McDonald 2, Jimena Sanchez Ortega, Lucy Hughes.
Assists – Gala Sanchez Ortgea, Jimena Sanchez Ortega, McDonald.
Records – Dowagiac 5-1-1.

Wednesday's results

EDWARDSBURG 3, STURGIS 2

Goals — Kateland Lira, Kam Toth, Shaylin Tinkahm.
Assists – Kennedy Goorhouse, Kateland Lira.
Records – Edwardsburg 2-2.

GIRLS TENNIS

Tuesday's results

KALAMAZOO CHRISTIAN 8, DOWAGIAC 0

Singles — 1. Kennedy Price (KC) d. Hailey Spivey 6-0, 6-0; 2. Aidan Ward (KC) d. Kylie Lynch 6-0, 6-1; 3. Katie Meints (KC) d. Makyah West 6-1, 6-0; 4. Cora DeGroot (KC) d. Kai Kruger 6-0, 6-3.
Doubles – 1. Bevin Maskill-Piper Scarlett (KC) d. Rylan Miller-Belinda Pavia-Morales 6-0, 6-1; 2. Harper Scarlett-MacKenzie Maskill (KC) d. Chloe Samuel-Lily Lebeda 6-1, 6-0; 3. Katy Smith-Reese Rigby (KC) d. Kendall Kroepel-Olivia Stockwell 6-0, 6-1; 4. Ava Degroot-Tessa Chairs (KC) d. Isabella Hertter-Ja'myla Bonds 6-0, 6-0.

NILES 6, PAW PAW 2

Singles — 1. Cheyenne Small (N) d. Alyssa Crain 7-5, 6-0; 2. Lexie Fisher (PP) d. Donna Babler 3-6, 6-0, 6-1; 3. Mia Abarca (N) d. Amelia Farrell 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (5); 4. Bella Castillo (N) d. Gracie Eagle 6-2, 6-3.
Doubles – 1. Hailee Mitchell-Addison VanDalsen (N) d. Kate Rentschler-Aili Shaughnessy 3-6, 6-2, 7-6 (3); 2. Brooklyn Hemminger-Scarlet Thalman (N) d. Mariela Pantoja-Kylah Jacobs 7-6 (5), 2-6, 6-1; 3. Lily Brausch-Pam Seckler (PP) d. Norah Rogers-Azlynne Ingle 6-3, 6-1; 4. Carrie Castillo-Aurora Custard (N) d. Karsyn Reits-Maggie Willbrandt 7-5, 6-1.

BRANDYWINE 8, SOUTH HAVEN 0

Singles — 1. Sydney Olson (BW) d. Addy Cook 6-1, 6-0; 2. Louise Peterson (BW) d. Harley Nail 6-0, 6-1; 3. Chelsy Olson (BW) d. Leah Becker 6-2, 6-0; 4. Khloe Austin (BW) d. Violet Burgoyne 6-3, 6-2.
Doubles – 1. Karleigh Byrd-Lilly Gill (BW) d. Maria Bootch-Sarah Diaz-Salinas 6-0, 6-0; 2. Alison Murray-Holly Anderson (BW) d. Mireya Arvizu-Sheyla Gonzalez 6-2, 6-2; 3. Khloe Vanderboegh-Aleyna Vollman (BW) d. Remmi Rigozzi-Regan Nail 6-0, 6-1; 4. Makenzi Myer-Alaine Roberts (BW) d. Grace Armendariz-Khloe Smith 6-1, 6-0.

Thursday's results

BERRIEN SPRINGS 8, DOWAGIAC 0

Singles — 1. Nini Ren (BS) d. Hailey Spivey 6-3, 6-0; 2. Melody Kertawidjaja (BS) d. Kylie Lynch 6-0, 6-0; 3. Briella Streelman (BS) d. Makyah West 6-7 (7), 6-1, 10-8; 4. Hyewon Lee (BS) d. Kai Kruger 6-2, 6-2.
Doubles – 1. Sarina Halder-Thandazo Jungu (BS) d. Rylan Miller-Riley Huff 6-1, 6-0; 2. Allison Parker-Paige Wagner (BS) d. Chloe Samuel-Lily Lebeda 6-0, 6-1; 3. Angie Pangemanan-Piper Perez (BS) d. Olivia Stockwell-Kendall Kroepel 6-1, 6-0; 4. Azucena Ventura-Nellie Patsika (BS) d. Belinda Pavia-Morales-Elizabeth Kelly 6-0, 6-0.

BOYS GOLF

Tuesday's results

LAKELAND/BCS JAMBOREE AT INDIAN LAKE HILLS

Team scores — 1. Buchanan 169, 2. Berrien Springs 183, 3. Our Lady of the Lake 201, Brandywine 206, Red Arrow 210, Dowagiac 216, Howardsville 234.
Medalist – Jeremiah Bond (D)
Buchanan – Dean Wegner 40, Jacob Kuntz 42, Austin Gregory 43, Tyler Frame 44.
Brandywine – Jayden Thomaas 49, Davis Lotsbaich 49, Blake Magyar 50, Cody Hoskin 58.
Dowagiac – Bond, Emmett Roach 58, James Greene 59, Austin Hart 61, Kyler True 62.

Wednesday's results

RED ARROW INVITATIONAL

Team scores — 1. Buchanan 349, 2. Lakeshore 360, 3. Berrien Springs 368, Bridgman 382, 5. Brandywine 389, 6. St. Joseph 2 393, 7. Dowagiac 415, Our Lady of the Lake 419, Red Arrow Raiders 430.
Medalist – Dylin Hays (Bridgman) 81.
Buchanan – Austin Gregory 85, Dean Wegner 86, Tyler Frame 88, Jacob Kuntz 90.
Brandywine – Blake Magyar 90, Davis Lotsbaich 95, Jayden Thomas 97, Brady Schoff 107.
Dowagiac – Jeremiah Bond 92, Mason Ausra 103, James Greene 108, Emmett Roach 112.

TRACK AND FIELD

Tuesday's results

Boys

Team scores – Paw Paw 86, Edwardsburg 51

Top local finishers

100 – 2. Mobius Stubblefield (E) 11.79; 200 – 2. Gio Orue (E) 24.13; 400 – 1. Stubblefield (E) 51.52; 800 – 1. George Scupham (E) 2:02.42; 1600 – 1. Ethan Ferguson (E) 4:39.63; 3200 – 4. Riley Szalai (E) 11:16.15; 110 hurdles – 1. Lyle Schaible (E) 17.30; 300 hurdles – 3. Schaible (E) 45.11; 400 relay – 2. Edwardsburg (Fredrik Sante, Chase Karkiewicz, Stubblefield, Orue) 45.01; 800 relay – 2. Edwardsburg (Alex Scott, Landon Boomershine, Luca Vargo, Tanner Mavracic) 1:42.43; 1600 relay – 1. Edwardsburg (Lyle Schaible, Mobius Stubblefield, George Scupham, Jack Bell) 3:33.07; 3200 relay – 2. Edwardsburg (Braiden Schuh, Gavin Ayers, Clark Stevens, Sawyer Bailey) 9:25.61; Shot put – 5. Frank Morris (E) 36-6; Discus – 4. Frank Morris (E) 93-9; High jump – 1. Landon Boomershine (E) 6-2; Pole vault – 1. Lucas Frentz (E) 12-6 SB; Long jump – 3. Peter Szlanfucht (E) 19-5.

Girls

Team scores – Edwardsburg 74, Paw Paw 63

Top local finishers

100 – 2. Caliana Manfred (E) 13.98; 200 – 1. Georgia Babcock (E) 30.79; 400 – 1. Piper Bryant (E) 1:10.04; 800 – 2. Layla Gableman (E) 2:40.18; 1600 – 4. Jade Leith (E) 6:44.78; 100 hurdles – 1. Sarina Mora (E) 17.49; 300 hurdles – 1. Sienna Kaylor (E) 53.50; 400 relay – 1. Edwardsburg (Riley Petruska, Georgia Babcock, Cassidy Frentz, Caliana Manfred) 54.22; 800 relay – 2. Edwardsburg (Riley Petruska, Caliana Manfred, Cassidy Frentz, Georgia Babcock) 1:53.77; 1600 relay – 1. Edwardsburg (Riley Petruska, Caliana Manfred, Layla Gableman, Cassidy Frentz) 4:36.39; 3200 relay – 1. Edwardsburg (Brynlee Landis, Giselle Babcock, Jade Leith, Layla Gableman) 10:52.42; Discus – 1. Sarah Pippin (E) 93-10; High jump – 1. Sarah Pippin (E) 5-0; Pole vault – 1. Abbigail Peat (E) 8-6; Long jump – 1. Sarina Mora (E) 17-1.5.

Niles girls tennis downs Bronson 7-1

PMG STAFF

NILES — The Niles girls tennis team took care of business Friday with a 7-1 victory over Bronson.

In singles play, Cheyenne Small a 6-3, 6-0 win over Bronson's Aleah Brackett in No. 1 singles. The Vikings also saw strong performances from No. 2 Donna Babler, who defeated Ella Ramsey 6-2, 6-1, and No. 3 Mia Abarca, who took down Sophia Reed 6-1, 6-3. Bronson's lone point of the day came at No. 4 singles, where Hailey Francom defeated Bella Castillo 6-4, 6-1.

In No. 1 doubles play, Niles' Hailee Mitchell and Addison VanDalsen earned a 6-1, 6-0 win over Kyleigh Springman and Braylyn Dow. Scarlet Thalman and Bella Ladesma took the No. 2 spot 6-0, 6-1, while Azlynne Ingle and Norah Rogers mirrored that score at No. 3 doubles. Aurora Custard and Carrie Castillo completed the sweep at No. 4 doubles with a 6-0, 6-0 victory.

Mystics select ND's Prosper with No. 19 pick in 2026 WNBA Draft

SUBMITTED

LM Otero / AP

Notre Dame guard Cassandre Prosper (8) shoots between Vanderbilt's Mikayla Blakes (1) and Justine Pissott (13) in the second half in the Sweet 16 on March 27 in Fort Worth, Texas.

NEW YORK — After a successful undergraduate career at Notre Dame, Cassandre Prosper is on to the WNBA. The Montreal native was selected by the Washington Mystics on Monday with the No. 19 overall pick in the 2026 WNBA Draft.

Prosper, just the second early enrollee in program history, joined Notre Dame in December 2022 and is coming off her best season to date. This year, Prosper started in all 36 of Notre Dame's games and was named the ACC's Most Improved Player. She also earned a spot on the All-ACC Second Team.

The 6-3 wing averaged 13.6 points, 6.5 rebounds, 1.6 steals and 1.1 blocks per game, all career-highs. She shot 49.2 percent from the floor and 73.8 percent from the free throw line. Her name peppered the ACC rankings – field goal percentage (eighth), field goals (eighth), total points (11th) and blocks per game (17th). She did not rank in the top 20 in the conference in any category prior to this season.

Additionally, Prosper scored 10+ points in 27 games, recorded six double-doubles and had six showings of 20+ points. She earned USBWA National Player of the Week honors twice, joining teammate Hannah Hidalgo as the only ACC players to accomplish the feat more than once during the year.

Over the course of her career, Prosper played in 97 games, making 43 starts. She averaged 8.7 points and 4.8 rebounds per game, finishing her Irish career with 842 total points and 465 total rebounds.

Prosper is the 24th player in Notre Dame history to be drafted, and the third to be drafted by Washington. She is the fourth WNBA draft selection under Karen and Kevin Keyes Family Head Women's Basketball Coach Niele Ivey, joining Sonia Citron (Washington Mystics), Liatu King (Los Angeles Sparks) and Maddy Westbeld (Chicago Sky).

Jeff Douglas / For Leader Publications

Brayden Favors was named First Team All-Wolverine.

SIGNINGS

From page B1

"We're excited to welcome her into our program," Dampier said. "She's a sweet, kind-hearted young lady who represents the values we emphasize every day. Her length and versatility, with the ability to impact the game both inside and out, will be a significant asset as we continue building a winning culture. She's very independent, family-oriented, and brings the type of character, work ethic, and presence that align with what we expect from our student-athletes."

Collier-White was a prolific scorer who tallied more than 1,500 points during her time at St. Catherine's High School in Racine, Wisconsin.

"That alone speaks to how gifted she is," Dampier said. "She's quick, competitive, and has a true scorer's mentality, which is exactly what we need to take our program to the next level. Her ability to shoot, drive, and create will help us space the floor and play the style we want. I'm excited to coach her and watch her blossom into a great player."

Dyer was described by scouts as a pass-first guard who is also a good shooter from the perimeter.

"Kinah is a tough guard who can score on all three levels," Dampier said. "She understands the game, fits what we do and brings a maturity that shows every day. She's locked in on and off the court, and that mindset is going to help this program grow. Excited to welcome her to the family."

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OUTDOORS

Submitting hunting or fishing photos

Have a behemoth buck, a tremendous turkey or super-sized salmon? Please submit photos to sports@TheHP.com.

Your photo must be in focus, all persons in the photo must be identified, and the general location of the hunt must be provided (for example, 10-point buck shot in Benton Township, black bear shot near Munising, Mich., etc.)

Photo provided / Richard Thomas

Two male northern flickers having a territorial dispute on March 30 in Lincoln Township.

Flickers feud over local territory

Richard Thomas of Lincoln Township submitted photographs of two male northern flickers, taken March 30, on a silver maple tree in his yard. The male flickers appeared to be having a dispute over potential nesting territory, staring at each other and making some aggressive moves.

Jonathan Wuepper
Southwest Michigan Wildlife

We can tell that both of these birds are male flickers by the black "mustache" on their faces, lacking on the females. The northern flicker is a species of woodpecker, ranging across Michigan and the eastern half of North America during the summer months. The northern flicker is the second largest woodpecker found in Michigan, with a wingspan of 16 to 20 inches. Only the pileated woodpecker is larger.

During winter, it retreats from Canada and the northern portions of the lower 48 states. The majority of northern flickers spend the winter south of the Ohio River, but it can be found in fair numbers north to the Muskegon-Bay City line in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

The northern flicker flourishes in a wide variety of habitats including woods, swamps, suburban settings and urban areas with trees, making it the most abundant species of woodpecker in Michigan during the nesting season.

Like most woodpeckers in our region, the flicker eats primarily ants and other insects, but also consumes seeds, nuts, and grains. In winter, flickers may eat suet.

Flickers return to Michigan in late March and April. Nesting begins during late April in southern Michigan and June in the Upper Peninsula. An average of six to eight eggs, the largest clutch of any woodpecker in Michigan, are laid inside a nest hole of a dead or dying tree.

Southward flicker migration begins in September, peaking in October. By November, most flickers have departed Canada and also northern Michigan.

Brad Anderson of Bridgman submitted a photo of a field sparrow, taken March 30 at Warren Dunes State Park.

The field sparrow is easily identified by its pink bill, white eye ring, rusty cap and buffy breast. Field sparrows are found in large, unmowed fields, prairies, pastures, and shrubby areas.

The song of the field sparrow is akin to a bouncing ball, each bounce faster than the previous one.

Field sparrows migrate south of the Michigan state line for the winter. They arrive back in Berrien County by March 15. A 3-4 egg clutch is laid in a ground nest by late April. Many field sparrow nests fall prey to house cats, blue jays, and raccoons. The field sparrow nest is also a common brown-headed cowbird host.

Most field sparrows depart Berrien County by late October. Occasionally a few may spend the winter.

Jonathan Wuepper is an area naturalist. Report your sightings to him at wuepperj@gmail.com

Photo provided / Brad Anderson

A field sparrow on March 30 at Warren Dunes State Park.

New Yorkers flock to Manhattan park for lovable woodcocks' bobbing strut

By EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA and PATRICK WHITTLE
Associated Press

NEW YORK — American woodcocks came to New York City looking to strut their stuff, and New Yorkers fell in love.

The curious birds, known for their bobbing walks and kazoo-like calls, have drawn a crowd to Bryant Park in Midtown Manhattan since arriving in late March. Dozens of spectators are gathering at the park every day to try to catch a glimpse of the grapefruit-sized birds as they poke their long bills in the ground for earthworms.

"It's a very charismatic bird. I mean, it's goofy-looking. It's got eyes that are always looking at you no matter where you are. It does this nice little dance when it's nervous," said Bill Rankin, a Yale University professor who stopped by the park. "Having two of them together is a kind of nice little romantic story of spring."

The woodcocks are known to stop at Bryant Park every year as they migrate north in early spring. They are strange-looking critters, seemingly assembled from the parts of other birds – a round body, enormous eyes and a long, thin bill. They're also called "timberdoodles" or "bogsuckers" by some.

They've attracted more fans than usual at the park this year, in part because of widely shared videos and pictures on social media. Crowds of bird fans carrying smartphones and cameras are craning daily for a look at its silly walk, while mostly maintaining a respectful distance.

The walk, which made the woodcock a viral hit on social media, consists of the bird shimmying and bobbing its head. Some woodcock lovers describe it as a mating dance, but scientists who study them have different theories. They've described it as possibly an antipredator display or foraging technique.

"What you're seeing in Bryant Park when it's sitting around when these crowds are looking at it, is mostly a little bit of foraging behavior," said Andrew Farnsworth, a scientist with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "A little of roosting and stretching, and then some of this sort of, you know, kind of sensory stuff looking around, and a little bit of deception, too."

The woodcock's courtship display is another sensation. The male makes a buzzing call described by birdwatchers as a "meep" or "peent" before flying high and erratically against the night sky to try to win the affection of the female.

The woodcocks in Manhattan will likely continue migrating north in the middle of April. The birds' popularity has provided a valuable opportunity to educate the public about the threats they face, such as collisions with building glass, said Ryan F. Mandelbaum, a New York City naturalist and author of the book "Wild NYC: Experience the Amazing Nature in and around New York City."

While not endangered, American woodcocks have experienced a population decline in recent decades.

"I was heartened to see that people are engaging with the conservation threats around light pollution and glass that woodcocks face," Mandelbaum said.

Sarett Nature Center

Sarett Nature Stewards: 2-4 p.m. each Wednesday. This program is a way to experience Sarett in a whole different way. By being a nature steward you are helping Sarett but you also gain a sense of well-being. Sarett's crew will teach you many different skills such as collecting viable seeds for future planting, how to identify invasive species from native ones, removing invasive plants, and more. Ages 10+.

Birding for Beginners: 9-11 a.m. April 18 and May 2. This introduction will cover everything you need to know about birding, whether you are wondering which birds are visiting your feeders or if you want to go far afield. Sarett will even provide binoculars for you to use during class time. Cost is $5 per class for members, $7 for non-members. Call 927-4832 to register.

Watervliet Rod & Gun Club

Ladies Day Basic Firearm Safety and Training Class: 8 a.m.-4 p.m. May 23 at the club, 3413 Hennessey Road in Watervliet. Ladies, here is your chance to learn to safely handle and use firearms, and learn about different kinds of ammunition and firearms. Have the opportunity to shoot .22 caliber handguns, rifles, and 20-gauge shotguns on the range with one-to-one instruction. Cost is $30. Lunch, firearms and ammo provided. Bring eye and ear protection. For more information, call (269) 470-9191 or (269) 861-5156, or email wrg49098@gmail.com.

Michigan Concealed Pistol Classes: Held monthly at the club. Cost is $100. For more information or to register, call (269) 470-9191 or (269) 463-8785, or go to watervlietrodandgunclub.org

Email info for Get Outdoors to sports@TheHP.com, or call 429-1294 by Monday.

Michigan considers 'one buck rule' to balance herd, better control population

By LAURA HERBERG
Bridge Michigan

Hunters are divided over a proposed "one buck rule" that some hope would help balance the buck-to-doe ratio, curb overpopulation in the Lower Peninsula and make deer hunting better for future generations by leaving more prize bucks on the table.

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission, the state's hunting and fishing regulator, is considering a policy that would mean no hunter in the state could kill more than one antlered deer. In the Lower Peninsula, hunters would need a special license to kill any bucks.

Currently, hunters in Michigan can kill two antlered deer per season, except on Drummond Island, where they are already limited to one.

The commission is expected to vote on a version of the one buck rule recommended by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources – and other proposed deer regulations – on May 13. If passed as currently written, the one buck rule would go into effect in 2027.

It's an idea that some think could be a game-changer for deer hunting in the state. Others think it will have little impact except limiting hunters' options.

"We have a buck-centric culture in Michigan. Everybody wants their buck. And we have an aversion, a flat-out refusal, to shoot does by many people. That needs to change," said hunter Dan Ulfig. "It's obvious that the one buck rule will improve antlerless harvest."

Derek Rauch, however, said he agreed the DNR needs to find a way to get hunters to kill more antlerless deer, balance the herd's sex ratio and increase hunter satisfaction, but he didn't think it was clear the one buck rule would do the trick.

"A lot of hunters are going to see this as paying more for less flexibility, and all for a rule the state itself says will only have modest immediate effects," he said.

Of note, the DNR refers to bucks as an antlered deer, which is any deer with an antler of 3 inches or more in length.

In the Lower Peninsula, if hunters buy a single deer license, it would default to being for an antlerless deer. If a hunter wanted to kill an antlered deer, they'd need to buy a combination license – raising the price from $20 to $40 for residents – and then only one of those deer could be antlered.

According to the DNR's deer specialist, Brent Rudolph, a version of the one buck rule came out of the department's deer advisory teams, as well as a request from Natural Resources Commissioner John Walters, who asked the department to write a recommendation to address the state's buck-to-doe ratio.

The DNR does not know the buck-to-doe ratio in the state, but has a sense of the ratio from the deer hunters kill. In a given year, around 20 percent of hunters harvest an antlerless deer.

Over the past decade, 4 percent to 7 percent of killed deer – or 32,000 per year – were a second antlered deer killed by one hunter, the DNR said.

"Restricting hunters to a single buck doesn't, according to our statistics, protect a whole lot of additional deer. There's not a lot of hunters that take two bucks," said Rudolph. "But it limits the options that folks have, and hopefully creates more of a reinforcement for antlerless harvest as an important part of the take."

Hunters are divided on the issue. The DNR has never asked them about its specific recommendation, but, in 2020, a DNR survey found slightly less than half of hunters – 48 percent – would have supported limiting the combination license to allow for only one buck to be killed.

At the Natural Resources Commission meeting on Wednesday, hunters spanning generations packed the room – many without seats – to have their voices heard on whether to limit hunters to killing one buck per season.

During a public comment period that lasted nearly four hours and included some who drove eight hours from the Upper Peninsula to get there, applause was louder for comments in support of the one buck rule.

"You don't get a turnout like this when things are working," said Josh Arbogast, a supporter of the one buck rule. "Young hunters who have been absent are here today because they still believe that this can change."

CITY OF DOWAGIAC (CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN) NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AMBULANCE SERVICES SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of City of Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, has resolved its intention to proceed, pursuant to Act 368, Public Acts of Michigan, 1978, as amended ("Act 368") and Act 33, Public Acts of Michigan, 1951, as amended ("Act 33"), to defray the capital costs and operating costs of ambulance operations and services in the City by special assessment on the lands and premises in the City to be benefited, except for lands and premises exempt from the collection of taxes under the General Property Tax Act.

The Ambulance Services Special Assessment District No. 1 (the "Special Assessment District") consists of all the lots and parcels of property located within the boundaries of the City of Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, against which all or a portion of the cost of the Ambulance Service shall be specially assessed, except for lands and premises exempt from the collection of taxes under the General Property Tax Act.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the Mayor has made and certified a special assessment roll for the Special Assessment District, which roll sets forth the relative portion of the cost of the Ambulance Services that is to be levied for the upcoming tax year in the form of special assessments against each benefited lot and parcel of land in the special assessment district.

HEARING

TAKE NOTICE that the City Council of the City of Dowagiac will hold a public hearing on April 27, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., at the City Hall, located at 241 S. Front Street, Dowagiac, Michigan 49047 to review the special assessment roll and to hear and consider any objections thereto.

TAKE NOTICE that appearance and protest at the public hearing is required in order to appeal the amount of the special assessment to the state tax tribunal.

TAKE NOTICE that an owner or party in interest, or his or her agent, may appear in person at the hearing to protest the special assessment, or may file his or her appearance or protest by letter, on or before the close of the hearing.

TAKE NOTICE that any person objecting to the assessment roll is requested to file written objections thereto with the City Clerk before the close of the hearing, or within such further time as the City Council may grant.

TAKE NOTICE that an owner or any person having an interest in the real property may file a written appeal of the special assessment with the State tax tribunal within thirty-five (35) days after the confirmation of the special assessment roll, if the owner or person having an interest in the real property protested the special assessment at the hearing held for the purpose of confirming the roll.

Michigan Tax Tribunal
1033 S. Washington Avenue
P. O. Box 30232
Lansing, Michigan 48909

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the special assessment roll as prepared has been reported to the City Council and is on file with the City Clerk for public examination.

This notice was authorized by the Dowagiac City Council.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
City Manager
City of Dowagiac
251 S. Front Street
Dowagiac, Michigan 49047
Telephone: 269-782-2195
Amanda Sleigh, Assistant City Manager, City of Dowagiac

STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS OF INDIANA MICHIGAN POWER COMPANY CASE NO. U-21597

· Indiana Michigan Power Company requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval for reconciliation of its power supply cost recovery plan (Case No. U-21596) for the twelve months ending December 31, 2025.

· The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.

· You may call or write Indiana Michigan Power Company, Benton Harbor Service Center, 2425 Meadowbrook Rd., Benton Harbor, MI 49022, (800) 311-6424, for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the documents at the offices of Indiana Michigan Power Company or on the Commission's website at: https://mi-psc.my.site.com/s/.

· A pre-hearing will be held:
DATE/TIME: Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 9:30 AM
BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge James M. Varchetti
LOCATION: Video/Teleconference
PARTICIPATION: Any interested person may participate. Persons needing any assistance to participate or who are seeking access to the video/teleconference should contact the Administrative Law Judge's secretary at (517) 284-8130 or by email at LARA-MOAHR-PSC@michigan.gov in advance of the hearing.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a pre-hearing to consider Indiana Michigan Power Company's (I&M) March 30, 2026 application requesting the Commission to: 1) approve I&M's Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) Reconciliation proceeding for the twelve-month period ending December 31, 2025; 2) approve I&M's 2025 PSCR reconciliation of its power supply costs, revenues, an interest for January through December 2025, and determine that the power supply costs as proposed were reasonably and prudently incurred; 3) authorize I&M to roll the cumulative net actual total over-recovered principal and interest amount of $8,842,1481 into its 2025 PSCR Plan year costs and otherwise determine I&M's power supply costs to be reasonable and prudently incurred; and 4) Grant I&M such other and further relief as the Commission may deem necessary, suitable, or appropriate.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: https://mi-psc.my.site.com/s/. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: LARA-MPSC-edockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: LARA-MPSC-edockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by April 30, 2026. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Indiana Michigan Power Company's attorney, Jason T. Hanselman, 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933.

The prehearing is scheduled to be held remotely by video conference or teleconference. Persons filing a petition to intervene will be advised of the process for participating in the hearing.

Any person wishing to appear at the hearing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of their wish to make a statement of position. Mich Admin Code, R 792.10413 (Rule 413).

Any person wishing to file a public comment may do so by filing a written statement in this docket. The written statement may be mailed or emailed and should reference Case No. U-21597. Statements may be emailed to: LARA-MPSC-edockets@michigan.gov. Statements may be mailed to: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, 7109 West Saginaw Hwy., Lansing, MI 48917.

All information submitted to the Commission in this matter becomes public information, thus available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Executive Secretary at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules R 792.10422 and R 792.10432. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130.

The Utility Consumer Representation Fund has been created for the purpose of aiding in the representation of residential utility customers in various Commission proceedings. Contact the Chairperson, Utility Consumer Participation Board, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, P.O. Box 30004, Lansing, Michigan 48909, for more information.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; and Parts 1 & 4 of the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules, Mich. Admin Code, and R 792.10401 through R 792.10448. U-21597

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE CASS COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT
60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 (269) 445-4412

FRANK & FRED, LLC
Plaintiff
vs
HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS OF ELLA E. BATCHELOR AND MATTIE CHAPMAN AND THOSE WITH CLAIMS TO REAL ESTATE
Defendants

ORDER FOR SUBSTITUTED SERVICE
File No.: 26-000104-CH
HON. MARK A. HERMAN

JOHN R. COLIP (P25250)
BUTZEL LONG
Attorneys for Plaintiff
12 Longmeadow Village Drive, Suite 100
Niles, MI 49120
269-591-6915

ORDER FOR SUBSTITUTED SERVICE

AT A SESSION of said Court at the Courthouse in the City of Cassopolis, Cass County, Michigan, on March 23, 2026

PRESENT: Honorable Mark A. Herman, Trial Court Judge

On Motion of Plaintiff, Frank & Fred, LLC, by and through its attorney, JOHN R. COLIP Esq., of the law firm of BUTZEL LONG, herein and the Court having read the verified Motion for Substituted Service, and being fully advised in the premises:

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED, That Plaintiff's Motion for Substituted Service be, and it is hereby granted, and that service shall be made upon Defendants, in this matter by: (i) posting a copy of this Order with Attachment "A" in the Courthouse and in two other public places in Ontwa Township for three continuous weeks; and (ii) publishing this Order with Attachment "A" in the Leader, a newspaper published in Cass County, Michigan, for three consecutive weeks.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED That PCI Services is to post this Oder with Attachment "A" and provide proof of posting in compliance with this Order and file Proof of Posting with this Court.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that mailing a copy of this Order to Unknown Parties, their Heirs and Successors, is not necessary since there is no ascertainable way to determine the address nor the specific identity of those Defendants.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Attachment "A" is made a part of this Order and will accompany any posting or publication.

Date: March 23, 2026 Honorable Mark A. Herman (P34735)
Cass County 43rd Circuit Court Judge

Prepared by:
John R. Colip, Esq. (P25250
12 Longmeadow Village Drive Suite 100
Niles, MI 49120
269-591-6915

ATTACHMENT "A" TO ORDER FOR SUBSTITUTED SERVICE

NOTICE OF COMMENCMENT OF ACTION

An action to Quiet Title has been filed in the Cass County Circuit Court, in the State of Michigan. This action is filed by Plaintiff, Frank & Fred, LLC, against Defendants: Heirs and Successors of Ella E. Batchelor and Mattie Chapman and those with Claims to Real Estate, and any other persons or entities claiming any right or title to property located in Ontwa Township, Cass County, Michigan and legally described as:

The West 2 acres of the East 16 acres of the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 16, Township 8 South, Range 15 West, Cass Couty, Michigan

You must file your answer or take other action permitted by law in the Cass County Circuit Court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031, on or before 28 days from the date of the last publication. If you fail to do so, a Default Judgment will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint filed in this case. You may contact the law offices of BUTZEL LONG, 12 Longmeadow Village Drive, Suite 100, Niles, MI 49120, 269-591-6915, for any information on this matter.

Prepared By:
John R. Colip, Esq. (P25250)
12 Longmeadow Village Drive, Suite 100
Niles, MI 49120
269-591-6915

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on MAY 20, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Joseph R. Reaves and Tara R. Reaves, to Fifth Third Bank, Mortgagee, dated October 24, 2019 and recorded October 29, 2019 in Liber 1162, Page 2318 Cass County Records, Michigan. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Ninety-Four Thousand One Hundred Forty-One and 42/100 Dollars ($94,141.42).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on MAY 20, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Milton, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
Lots Numbered 8 and 9 of DUNNING ACRES, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, page(s) 333 of Cass County Records; EXCEPTING THEREFROM That part of said Lots 8 and 9 which lies Southeasterly of a line described as: Commencing at the East Quarter corner of Section 11, Town 8 South, Range 16 West, thence South 00 degrees 10 minutes 42 seconds East along the East line of said Section 11 a distance of 452.79 feet to the point of beginning, thence South 35 degrees 55 minutes 44 seconds West a distance of 242.37 feet to the survey line of Highway US-12 and point of ending.
69594 Anderson Rd, Niles, Michigan 49120
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: April 18, 2026
File No. 26-003083
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400 (04-18)(05-09)

ATTACHMENT A
NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BONDS TO THE ELECTORS, RESIDENTS, AND TAXPAYERS OF THE VILLAGE OF CASSOPOLIS AND NOTICE OF RIGHT OF REFERENDUM

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Village Council of the Village of Cassopolis, Cass County, Michigan (the "Village"), intends to authorize the issuance of NOT TO EXCEED Two Million Dollars ($2,000,000) Village of Cassopolis Capital Improvement Bonds (the "Bonds") pursuant to the Revised Municipal Finance Act, Act 34, Public Acts of Michigan, 2001, as amended, for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of the cost of constructing and improving certain utilities and infrastructure, including but not limited to, sanitary sewer and force main, sanitary lift stations, water main, and storm sewer, as well as constructing and improving roads, sidewalks, and parking lots, and performing site improvements and landscaping, as well as other necessary and related improvements, and engineering, architectural, legal, bond issuance and financing costs. The Bonds may be issued by the Village in one or more series, the aggregate principal amount of which will not exceed $2,000,000.

The Bonds, or any series of bonds, will be payable in not more than twenty (20) annual installments at an effective rate of interest to be determined upon sale the Bonds, payable on the unpaid principal balance from time to time remaining outstanding on the Bonds.

Any portion of the cost of the above-described project that will not be financed through the issuance of the Bonds will be paid for by the Village using available Village funds.

SOURCE OF PAYMENT OF BONDS

THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON THE BONDS will be payable primarily from general ad valorem taxes of the Village. In addition, the Bonds will be payable as a first budget obligation from the general funds of the Village and/or from ad valorem taxes dedicated to road improvements which must be levied by the Village as necessary to make such debt service payments, but subject to existing constitutional, statutory, and charter tax rate limitations. The full faith, credit and resources of the Village will be pledged for the payment of the principal of and interest on said Bonds, subject to applicable constitutional, statutory, and charter tax rate limitations.

NOTICE OF RIGHT OF REFERENDUM

THIS NOTICE is given pursuant to the requirements of Section 517 of the Revised Municipal Finance Act, Act 34, Public Acts of Michigan, 2001, as amended. If within forty-five (45) days from the publication of this NOTICE OF INTENT to issue Bonds a PETITION signed by not less than TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE REGISTERED ELECTORS residing within the limits of the Village of Cassopolis shall have been filed with the Village Clerk requesting a REFERENDUM on the question of the issuance of the Bonds, then the same shall not be issued until approved by the vote of the majority of the electors of the Village qualified to vote and voting thereon at a general or special election. The current number of registered electors in the Village is 1,650.

Further information regarding the proposed project and the Bonds described herein is available at the office of the Village Clerk of the Village of Cassopolis, Village Hall, 121 N. Disbrow Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031 (phone 269-445-8648).

Dated: April 13, 2026 TONIA WILLIAMS
Village Clerk
Village of Cassopolis

SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - CASS COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on May 06, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Lynn Marie Clark, a single woman Original Mortgagee: The Huntington National Bank, successor by merger to FMB Community Bank Date of mortgage: June 30, 1995 Recorded on July 20, 1995, Liber 593, on Page 185, and re-recorded via Loan Modification recorded on July 21, 1998 in Liber 669, on Page 782 Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Two Thousand Eighteen and 72/100 Dollars ($2,018.72) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Cass County, and described as: COMMENCING ON THE SOUTH LINE OF SECTION FOUR, TOWNSHIP SEVEN SOUTH OF RANGE SIXTEEN WEST, AT A POINT 1372 FEET WEST OF THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SECTION; THENCE WEST 116.2 FEET; THENCE NORTH AT RIGHT ANGLES TO THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 375 FEET; THENCE EAST 116.2 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 375 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING Commonly known as 2743 White St, Niles, MI 49120 The redemption period will be 12 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The Huntington National Bank Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1588637 (03-28)(04-18)

THE TOWNSHIP OF WAYNE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO SEMCO Energy Gas Company ordinance No. 26-02-01

An Ordinance, granting to SEMCO Energy Gas Company, a Michigan corporation, its successors and assigns, the right, power and authority to lay, maintain and operate gas mains, pipes and services on, along, across and under the highways, streets, alleys, bridges, waterways, and other public places, and to conduct a local gas business in the Township of Wayne, located in Cass County, Michigan, for a period of thirty years.

THE TOWNSHIP OF WAYNE ORDAINS:

Section I. GRANT OF FRANCHISE. The Township of Wayne, located in Cass County, Michigan (the "Township"), hereby grants to SEMCO Energy Gas Company, a division of SEMCO Energy, Inc., a Michigan corporation, its successors and assigns, (the "Grantee") the right, power and authority to construct, lay, operate, maintain and replace in the public streets, highways, alleys and other public places in the Township of Wayne, Michigan, all needful and proper gas pipes, mains, conductors, service pipes and other apparatus and facilities requisite for the manufacture, transmission and distribution of gas for all purposes to the Township of Wayne, and the inhabitants thereof, and for conducting gas elsewhere to supply neighboring cities, villages and other territories supplied with gas by said Grantee, for a period of thirty years.
Section 2. CONSIDERATION. In consideration of the rights, power and authority hereby granted, Grantee shall faithfully perform alt things required by the terms hereof.
Section 3. CONDITIONS. No highway, street, alley, bridge or other public place used by Grantee shall be obstructed longer than necessary during the work of construction or repair and shall be restored to as good order and condition as when Grantee commenced the work. All of Grantee's pipes and mains shall be so placed in the highways and other public places as not to unnecessarily interfere with the use thereof for highway purposes. Grantee will use its best efforts to not unreasonably interfere with or disrupt any public utility apparatus or facilities operated by the Township and, to the extent Grantee interferes with or disrupts any such public utility apparatus or facilities, Grantee shall restore such apparatus or facilities to as good order and condition as when Grantee commenced work.
section 4. HOLD HARMLESS. Grantee shall at all times keep and save the Township free and harmless from all loss, costs and expense to which it may be subject by reason of the Grantee's negligent construction and negligent maintenance of the structures and equipment hereby authorized. If any action is commenced against the Township resulting from Grantee's negligent construction and maintenance, Grantee shall, upon notice, defend the Township and save it free and harmless from all loss, cost and damage arising out of such negligent construction and maintenance.
Section5. FRANCHISE NOT EXCLUSIVE. herein granted, are not exclusive. Either manufactured or natural gas may be furnished hereunder.
Section 6. RATES. Grantee shall charge for gas furnished the rates, charges and special taxes as approved from time to time by the Michigan Public Service Commission, or its successors having authority and jurisdiction to fix and regulate gas rates and charges, or as otherwise permitted or required by applicable law or tariff, for the term of this franchise. Such rates shall be subject to Commission review and change at any time upon petition therefore being made by either said Township, acting by its Township Board, or by said Grantee.
Section 7. REVOCATION. The franchise granted by this ordinance is subject to revocation upon sixty (60) days written notice by the party desiring such revocation.
Section 8. MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION JURISDICTION. Grantee shall, as to all other conditions and elements of service not herein fixed, be and remain subject to the reasonable rules and regulations of the Michigan Public Service Commission or its successors, applicable to gas service in said Township and shall provide service in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in its applicable tariff as approved from time to time by the Michigan Public Service Commission or its successors.
Section 9. SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS. The words "SEMCO Energy Gas Company" and "SEMCO Energy, Inc.," wherever used herein, are intended and shall be held and construed to mean and include SEMCO Energy Gas Company and its parent, subsidiaries, successors, affiliates, and assigns, whether so expressed or not. The word "Grantee," wherever used herein, is intended and shall be held and construed to mean and include SEMCO Energy Gas Company, SEMCO Energy, Inc., and the successors and assigns of each, whether so expressed or not. Grantee may assign the rights and obligations under this agreement as long as the Grantee provides prior written notice to the Township of any such assignment.
Section 10. FORCE MAJEURE. The Grantee shall not be liable for failure to furnish service as herein provided, or for any breach of the Grantee's obligations hereunder, if such failure or breach is caused by acts of God, labor troubles, riot, or any other causes or contingencies not reasonably within the control of the Grantee.
Section II. VACATION OR RELOCATION. The Township may require the Grantee to vacate or relocate any portion of Grantee's facilities at the Grantee's expense if such vacation or relocation is necessary to secure the public health and welfare or is otherwise required by Grantor in the exercise of a governmental function.
Section 12. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS. Grantee shall comply with all laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations regarding the installation, construction, ownership or use of its facilities, whether federal, state, or local.
Section 13. EFFECTIVE DATE. Upon adoption, the Township Clerk shall deliver to Grantee a certified copy of this ordinance. Additionally, the Township shall publish this ordinance within thirty (30) days of its adoption, and this ordinance shall take effect upon the day after the date of publication thereof, continuing for a term of thirty (30) years from that date; provided, however, it shall cease and be of no effect after sixty (60) days from its adoption unless within said period the Grantee shall accept the same in writing filed with the Township Clerk.
Upon acceptance and publication hereof, the ordinance shall constitute a contract between said Township and said Grantee.

Ayes 3
Nays: 0
Date Passed: 02/02/2026

Attested, by Order of the Township of Wayne, Cass County, Michigan

/s/ Wayne Township Clerk
/s/ Wayne Township Supervisor

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, being the duly qualified and acting Clerk of Wayne Township, Cass County, Michigan, hereby certifies that: (l) the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Township Board at a regular meeting held on the 2ua day of February 2026, at which meeting a quorum was present and remained throughout,(2) the original thereof is on file in the records in my office, (3) the meeting was conducted, and public notice thereof was given, pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act (Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan,1976, as amended) and (4) minutes of such meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required thereby.

Dated: February 6, 2026 /s/ Wayne Township Clerk

ACCEPTANCE

SEMCO Energy Gas Company, a division of SEMCO Energy, Inc., the Grantee under a Franchise approved by Township of Wayne, County of Cass, Michigan, hereby accepts the Franchise, pursuant to the terms and conditions thereof.

SEMCO Energy Gas Company, a division of SEMCO Energy, Inc.

Dated: February 20, 2026 /s/ Marc Simone, President SEMCO Energy Gas Company

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Excellent condition, many Extras
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0700 REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

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0900 LEGALS

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BID
The Niles Community Schools will receive sealed bids for the construction of the Howard-Ellis Septic System. The Contract Documents including plans and specifications may be obtained at no charge by downloading from the Wightman website bidding page at https://bids.gowightman.com/.

EXHIBIT A
NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE REVENUE BONDS
AND NOTICE OF RIGHT OF REFERENDUM
TO THE ELECTORS, RESIDENTS AND TAXPAYERS
OF THE VILLAGE OF CASSOPOLIS
AND CUSTOMERS AND USERS OF THE
VILLAGE'S WATER SUPPLY AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Village Council of the Village of Cassopolis, Cass County, Michigan (the "Village Council"), intends to authorize the issuance of NOT TO EXCEED NINE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS ($9,500,000) Village of Cassopolis Water Supply and Sewage Disposal System Revenue Bonds (the "Bonds") pursuant to the Revenue Bond Act, Act 94, Public Acts of Michigan, 1933, as amended (the "Revenue Bond Act"), and/or the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451, Public Acts of Michigan, 1994, as amended ("NREPA"), for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of the cost of certain improvements to the Village's water supply and sewage disposal system including, but not limited to: force main replacements, replacement and rehabilitation of manholes, and upgrades to lift stations (the "Project") and costs of issuing the bonds.

The Bonds will be payable solely or primarily from revenues derived from rates and charges received from users and customers of the Village's water supply and sewage disposal system and will be payable in not more than thirty (30) annual installments at a rate of interest to be determined upon sale of the Bonds, currently estimated at 2.0% per annum, payable on the unpaid principal balance from time to time remaining outstanding on the Bonds.

The total cost of the Project is estimated to not exceed $9,500,000, all or a portion of which cost is to be paid from the proceeds of the Bonds.

SOURCE OF FUNDING

The State of Michigan, through its Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, makes funds available for sewer system improvement projects at a below-market interest rate through a Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund administered through the Michigan Finance Authority. The Village will seek to finance all or a portion of the entire Project cost through bonds issued through said Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund.

Pursuant to the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, there is a possibility that a portion of the principal amount of the proposed Bonds would be forgiven, and the Village would not be required to repay that portion of the Bonds. However, the State of Michigan, through its Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, has not provided the Village with any assurances at this time that it will be granted loan forgiveness for any portion of the Bonds' principal amount, so it is uncertain whether any principal amount of the proposed Bonds will be forgiven.

SOURCE OF PAYMENT OF BONDS

THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON THE BONDS shall be payable from the net revenues derived from the operation of the Village's water supply and sewage disposal system remaining after payment of operation and maintenance expenses. Said revenues consist of rates and charges for services, including connection fees, which rates and charges are required to be maintained and increased from time to time in order to provide sufficient revenues to meet expenses for operating and maintaining the water supply and sewage disposal system, anticipated principal of and interest on Bonds, and to provide reserves for payment thereof. A schedule of the rates and charges is on file in the office of the Village Clerk of the Village of Cassopolis, 121 N. Disbrow Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031.

ADDITIONAL SECURITY – FULL FAITH AND CREDIT PLEDGE

In the event that (1) the Bonds are sold to the Michigan Finance Authority, and/or (2) certain state or federal financing is received for the Project costs, the Village would be authorized pursuant to the Revenue Bond Act and/or NREPA to pledge, and may decide to pledge if necessary and/or advisable, its full faith and credit for the repayment of the Bonds. In this event, the Village would be authorized within its constitutional, statutory and charter tax rate limitations to levy such taxes or advance such funds from the general funds of the Village as may be necessary to prevent or cure any default in the repayment of the Bonds resulting from an insufficiency of revenues derived from the operation of the Village's water supply and sewage disposal system. Although it is not anticipated that the Village will ever be required to advance funds, the Village would, in the event of an advance, be entitled to be repaid from the next water supply and sewage disposal system revenues available after correction of any deficiency or default.

NOTICE OF RIGHT OF REFERENDUM

THIS NOTICE is given pursuant to the requirements of the Revenue Bond Act and NREPA. If within forty-five (45) days from the publication of this NOTICE OF INTENT to issue Bonds a PETITION signed by not less than TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE REGISTERED ELECTORS residing within the limits of the Village of Cassopolis shall have been filed with the Village Clerk requesting a REFERENDUM on the question of the issuance of the bonds, then the same shall not be issued until approved by the vote of the majority of the electors of the Village qualified to vote and voting thereon at a general or special election. The current number of registered electors in the Village is 1,650.

Further information regarding the Project and the Bonds described herein is available at the office of the Village Clerk of the Village of Cassopolis, 121 N. Disbrow Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, phone (269) 445-8648.

Dated: April 13, 2026
Tonia Williams, Village Clerk
Village of Cassopolis

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on April 29, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Ray Bloomer, an unmarried man
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): PennyMac Loan Services, LLC
Date of Mortgage: November 22, 2017
Date of Mortgage Recording: December 7, 2017
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $98,790.92
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Wayne, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Commencing North 1127.28 feet from the Southeast corner of the North Three Quarters of the East Half of the East Half of the Southeast Quarter of Section 22, Township 5 South, Range 15 West; thence West 436.14 feet; thence South 277.28 feet; thence East 436.14 feet; thence North 277.28 feet to beginning.
Common street address (if any): 53702 Glenwood Rd, Dowagiac, MI 49047-7423
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: March 28, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515 1588221 (03-28)(04-18)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
MILTON TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MI
32097 Bertrand St
Niles, MI 49120

To: The residents and property owners of Milton Township, Cass County Michigan and any other interested parties.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE the Planning Commission of Milton Township, Cass County Michigan will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, commencing at 7:00 p.m., at the Milton Township Hall, 32097 Bertrand St, Niles MI 49120.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE the Planning Commission is considering an amendment to Milton Township Zoning Ordinance, as follows:

Section 1. Amendment of Section 3.12. Section 3.12 of the Milton Township Zoning Ordinance is amended to read in its entirety as follows:

Section 3.12 Land Divisions

1. No lot or parcel (platted or unplatted) shall be divided unless first approved by the Planning Commission.
2. Prior to review by the Planning Commission, the Township Zoning Administrator or Assessor shall review the application to ensure that there are splits available in accordance with the Michigan Land Division Act and any other public or private restrictions or regulations that may apply to the property.
3. All parcels created after the _____, 2026, shall contain the minimum required frontage on a public or approved private street.
4. No land division shall be permitted that results in the creation of a nonconforming building, lot, or use, unless the Planning Commission finds that the overall nonconforming situation would be improved by granting the division.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that written comments will be taken from any interested persons concerning the foregoing proposed amendment, at the Milton Township Hall, at the address set forth above, at any time during regular business hours up to 4:00 o'clock p.m. on the date of said hearing and will further be received by the Planning Commission at the time of said hearing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that all persons interested in the foregoing are invited to be present at the aforesaid Public Hearing time and place to participate in the discussion. More information can be obtained by calling Milton Township at 269-591-7982. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services, and wish to attend the hearing, should contact the office of the Township Clerk, by writing or calling the Clerk, at least five (5) days prior to the hearing to ensure needed accommodations.

Kristen Barrera, Clerk
Milton Township Planning Commission

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on APRIL 29, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Bernice L. Crawford, a single woman, to The CIT Group/Sales Financing, Inc., a Delaware Corporation, Mortgagee, dated November 9, 1998 and recorded November 12, 1998 in Liber 681, Page 1291 Cass County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by U.S. Bank National Association, as Trustee, for Lehman ABS Manufactured Housing Contract Senior/Subordinate Asset-Backed Certificate Trust, Series 2001-B, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Eighteen Thousand Three Hundred Six and 50/100 Dollars ($18,306.50).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on APRIL 29, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Calvin, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
The East half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, excepting therefrom, the South 1105.5 feet thereof. Also excepting therefrom, the North 11.65 5/8 chains thereof.Also excepting therefrom, Beginning 6.65 5/8 chains South of the Northeast corner of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West; thence South 20 rods; thence West 80 rods; thence North 20 rods; thence East 80 rods to the point of beginning.Also excepting therefrom, The North four (4) Rods of the south Fifty-one (51) Rods of the East half of the Northeast quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, Calvin Township, Cass County, Michigan.Also excepting therefrom, The North ten (10) Rods of the south forty-seven (47) Rods of the East half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, Calvin Township, Cass County, Michigan.Also excepting therefrom, Commencing 51 Rods North of the Southwest corner of the East half of the Northeast quarter; thence North 264 feet; thence East to the Section Line; thence South 264 feet; thence West to the point of beginning. Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West.Also excepting therefrom, Part of the East Half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, described as: From the Northeast corner of said Section 13, measure North 89 degrees 25'20" West, along the North line of said Section, 1328.03 feet to the Northwest corner of the East Half of the Northeast Quarter of said Section; thence South along the East Eighth line of said Section, 769.32 feet to the point of beginning of the land herein described; thence South 89 degrees 25'20" East, 182.00 feet; thence South 125.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 25'20" West, 182.00 feet to the East Eighth line of said Section; thence North along the Eighth line, 125.00 feet to the point of beginning.Also excepting therefrom pursuant to the partial release recorded in Liber 1029, Page 832, FROM THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SECTION 13, TOWN 7 SOUTH, RANGE 14 WEST, MEASURE N88 DEGREES 53'06"W, ALONG THE NORTH SECTION LINE, 1327.37 FEET TO THE EAST EIGHTH LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE MEASURE S00 DEGREES 50' 15W, ALONG SAID LINE, 894.32 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED; THENCE S88 DEGREES 53'10"E (PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED AS S89 DEGREES 25'20"E) 182.00 FEET; THENCE N00 DEGREES 50 15 E (PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED AS NORTH) 125.00 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF THE NORTH 23.3125 ACRES OF THE EAST HALF OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SAID SECTION; THENCE S88 DEGREES 53' 10" E ALONG LINE, 466.56 FEET; THENCE S00 DEGREES 50'15" W, PARALLEL WITH THE EAST EIGHTH LINE, 371.42 FEET; THENCE N88 DEGREES 53'10" W 648.56 FEET TO THE EAST EIGHTH LINE; THENCE N00 DEGREES 50'15"E, ALONG SAID LINE, 246.42 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.
64277 Union Rd, Vandalia, Michigan 49095
The redemption period shall be 12 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: March 28, 2026
File No. 26-002985
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400 (03-28)(04-18)

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TODAY!

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN ACTIVE DUTY. ATTN PURCHASERS: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Under the power of sale contained herein in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or a cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in CASS County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on May 20, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE SALE – Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by David Wyatt, an unmarried man, original mortgagor, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems as Nominee for Milend, Inc, dated March 8, 2024, and recorded in Liber 1243 Page 481 in CASS County records, Michigan, and assigned to Planet Home Lending, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on July 22, 2025 in Liber 1263, Page 91, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Ninety-Four Thousand Six-Hundred Fifty-One and 63/100 dollars ($194,651.63). Said premises are situated in the Township of Jefferson, County of Cass, State of Michigan to wit: Part of the North half of the Northeast quarter of Section 31, Township 7 South, Range 15 West, Jefferson Township, Cass County, Michigan, described as: From the North quarter corner of said Section 31, measure South 89 degrees 47 minutes 45 seconds East, along the North line of said Section 1326.00 feet to the point of beginning of the land herein described; thence South 89 degrees 47 minutes 45 seconds East, along said North line, 156.50 feet; thence South 0 degrees 22 minutes 35 seconds East, 454.77 feet; thence North 89 degrees 55 minutes 15 seconds West, 156.50 feet; thence North 0 degrees 22 minutes 35 seconds West, 455.11 feet to the point of beginning. Commonly known as: 27134 Deerfield Lane, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112 Parcel No.: 14-030-031-409-95 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Dated: April 4, 2026 For more information, please call: (513) 444-4100 Sottile and Barile PLLC Attorneys for Plaintiff 394 Wards Corner Boulevard, Suite 180 Loveland, OH 45140 File MF2510005 - Wyatt, David (FHA) - DA (04-04)(04-25)

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in CASS County, starting promptly at 10:00 am, on May 20, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Brent W. Braaksma and Katie J. Braaksma, husband and wife, whose address is 66741 Conrad Road, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112, as original Mortgagors, to Fifth Third Mortgage Company, being a mortgage dated October 9, 2013, and recorded on October 21, 2013 in Liber 1068 Page 286, Cass County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to NewRez LLC, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated February 6, 2026 and recorded on February 6, 2026 in Liber 1271 Page 2509, Cass County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-FOUR THOUSAND NINETY-EIGHT AND 68/100 DOLLARS ($264,098.68). Said premises are situated in the City of Edwardsburg, County of Cass, State of Michigan, and are described as: PARCEL I FROM THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 30, TOWN 7 SOUTH, RANGE 15 WEST, MEASURE EAST, ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 471.94 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED, THENCE NORTH 18 DEGREES 49 MINUTES 31 SECONDS EAST 53.54 FEET, THENCE NORTH 05 DEGREES 00 MINUTES 28 SECONDS WEST 65.49 FEET; THENCE NORTH 23 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 16 SECONDS WEST 151.21 FEET, THENCE NORTH 07 DEGREES 15 MINUTES 05 SECONDS WEST 168.57 FEET, THENCE NORTH 25 DEGREES 51 MINUTES 53 SECONDS WEST 53.31 FEET; THENCE NORTH 13 DEGREES 54 MINUTES 10 SECONDS WEST 79.97 FEET; THENCE NORTH 14 DEGREES 07 MINUTES 11 SECONDS WEST 134.26 FEET, THENCE NORTH 07 DEGREES 08 MINUTES 19 SECONDS WEST 138.57 FEET, THENCE NORTH 28 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 56 SECONDS WEST 86.14 FEET, THENCE NORTH 46 DEGREES 04 MINUTES 52 SECONDS WEST 70.39 FEET, THENCE EAST 80.88 FEET, THENCE NORTH 00 DEGREES 02 MINUTES 25 SECONDS WEST 309.90 FEET TO AN INTERMEDIATE TRAVERSE LINE ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE OF PINE LAKE, THENCE SOUTH 53 DEGREES 52 MINUTES 43 SECONDS EAST ALONG SAID TRAVERSE LINE, 272.24 FEET TO THE EAST LINE OF THE WEST 15 ACRES OF THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST FRACTIONAL QUARTER OF SAID SECTION, THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 13 MINUTES 35 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID WEST LINE, 1089.43 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF THE SAID SECTION, THENCE WEST, ALONG SAID SOUTH LINE, 51.40 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. INCLUDING ALL LAND BETWEEN THE EAST AND WEST LINES EXTENDED NORTHERLY TO THE WATER'S EDGE OF PINE LAKE. PARCEL II RIGHTS AND BENEFITS OF AN EASEMENT FOR INGRESS AND EGRESS OVER THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE. BEGINNING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 30, TOWN 7 SOUTH, RANGE 15 WEST; THENCE NORTH 00 DEGREES 02 MINUTES 25 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID SECTION, 16.50 FEET, THENCE EAST, PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 460.15 FEET, THENCE NORTH 18 DEGREES 49 MINUTES 31 SECONDS EAST 38.25 FEET, THENCE NORTH 05 DEGREES 00 MINUTES 28 SECONDS WEST 59.35 FEET; THENCE NORTH 23 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 16 SECONDS WEST 150.88 FEET, THENCE NORTH 07 DEGREES 15 MINUTES 05 SECONDS WEST 168.19 FEET; THENCE NORTH 25 DEGREES 51 MINUTES 53 SECONDS WEST 52.33 FEET; THENCE NORTH 13 DEGREES 54 MINUTES 10 SECONDS WEST 81.66 FEET, THENCE NORTH 14 DEGREES 07 MINUTES 11 SECONDS WEST 135.24 FEET; THENCE NORTH 07 DEGREES 08 MINUTES 19 SECONDS WEST 138.50 FEET, THENCE NORTH 28 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 55 WEST 80.47 FEET, THENCE NORTH 46 DEGREES 04 MINUTES 52 SECONDS WEST 84.95 FEET, THENCE EAST 47.58 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 46 DEGREES 04 MINUTES 52 SECONDS EAST 55.84 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 28 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 55 SECONDS EAST 81.80 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 07 DEGREES 08 MINUTES 19 SECONDS EAST 140.65 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 14 DEGREES 07 MINUTES 11 SECONDS EAST 133.29 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 13 DEGREES 54 MINUTES 10 SECONDS EAST 78.27 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 25 DEGREES 51 MINUTES 53 SECONDS EAST 54.28 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 07 DEGREES 15 MINUTES 05 SECONDS EAST 168.95 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 23 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 16 SECONDS EAST 151.54 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 05 DEGREES 00 MINUTES 28 SECONDS EAST 71.63 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 18 DEGREES 48 MINUTES 31 SECONDS WEST 51.40 FEET TO THE SAID SOUTH LINE, THENCE WEST 489.38 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING PARCEL III RIGHTS AND BENEFITS OF AN EASEMENT FOR INGRESS AND EGRESS OVER THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE. FROM THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 30, TOWN 7 SOUTH, RANGE 15 WEST, MEASURE EAST, ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 471.94 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED, THENCE NORTH 18 DEGREES 49 MINUTES 31 SECONDS, 17.43 FEET, THENCE EAST, PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 45.71 FEET TO THE EAST LINE OF THE WEST 15 ACRES OF THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST FRACTIONAL QUARTER OF SAID SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 13 MINUTES 35 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID WEST LINE, 16.50 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE WEST, ALONG SAID SOUTH LINE, 51.40 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. Street Address: 66741 Conrad Road, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241(a) in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: April 18, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490) Johnson, Blumberg & Associates LLC 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602 312.541.9710 - Phone 312.541.9711 - Fax File No.: MI 26 7142 (04-18)(05-09)

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE 43RD CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE COUNTY OF CASS

Case No:
2026-0000000006-CZ
Hon. MARK HERMAN

TIMOTHY GRIGALANZ,
Plaintiff,
V.
PLANET HOME LENDING, LLC, KENNETH ALAN STRICKLAND,
Defendants.

ATTENTION: KENNETH ALAN STRICKLAND
STATE OF MICHIGAN, 43RD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CASS COUNTY. CASE NO. 2026-0000000006-CZ. A civil action has been filed against you, Kenneth Alan Strickland, by Plaintiff, Timothy Grigalanz The nature of the proceeding is a lawsuit seeking damages and equitable relief related to a real estate transaction and mortgage foreclosure, alleging fraud, procedural defects, and other claims.
YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that you are required to answer the complaint or take other action permitted by law within **21 DAYS** after the last date of publication of this notice, If you fail to do so, a default judgment may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint filed in this Court.
Plaintiff: Timothy Grigalanz
70335 Martin Rd Edwardsburg, MI 49112.
IT IS SO ORDERED.
Dated: 03/23/2026
/s/ HON. MARK HERMAN (P34735) 43rd Circuit Court Judge

STATE OF MICHIGAN
COUNTY OF CASS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

Estate of: Eleanor Moore
Date of birth: 12/21/1927

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Eleanor Moore, died 04/07/2026. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to, Richard Hass, Trustee of the Eleanor Moore Trust dated 10/14/2003, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Richard Hass
Trustee
610 Gamble Dr.
Address
Lisle IL 60532
City, state, zip

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Berrien

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO.
2026-0148-DE-J
Hon. Paul S. Jancha

Estate of: Bob Loyd Smith
Date of birth: 03/04/1944

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Bob Loyd Smith, died 11/25/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Mark Linville, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 811 Port St. St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date 04/14/2026

Heidi A. Duncan P76168
Attorney name Bar no.
107 Pennsylvania Ave
Address
Dowagiac, MI 49047
City, State, Zip
269-782-9895
Telephone no.

Mark Linville
Personal representative
253 Cline Street
Address
Westfield, IN 46074
City, state, zip
317-260-8160
Telephone

PUBLIC NOTICE
Jefferson Township Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Synopsis, April 9, 2026, Supervisor Hass called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Present: Brunner, Bundle, Gillam, Hass, Mendenhall.
REGULAR MEETING BOARD ACTION
• March 12 and 19, 2026 meeting minutes approved.
•Treasurer's Report given.
•Payment of bills authorized.
Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Locke, Clerk

BID PROPOSAL
The Owner, Niles Community Schools, will receive sealed bids for "Underground Storage Tank Removal and Aboveground Tank Installation" Please email rvilla @villaenv.com if you would like to receive bid documents.

People Do Read Small Ads. You Did!

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
Cass COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-025-DE

Court address:
60296 M-62,
Cassopolis, MI 49031
Court phone no.
269-4454454

Estate of: James Dallas Bradford, deceased
Date of birth: 09/07/1955

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, James Dallas Bradford died 01/25/2026. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to J. Bradford personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 04/15/2026
J. Bradford
Personal representative(s)
29221 Misty Pines Street
Dowagiac, MI 49047

PUBLIC NOTICE

THREAT TO TRANSPARENCY

Tell your lawmakers to prioritize transparency and keep Michigan's public notice requirements in newspapers.

Public notices like this one play a critical role in helping Michiganders learn about and weigh in on important tax proposals, zoning changes, new ordinances and proposed property developments that may affect you and your family.

Michigan already ranks among the worst states in the U.S. for government transparency, and some of our state lawmakers are trying to remove public notice requirements. That would make actions and decisions by government officials even less trans-parent to the people they serve.

Michigan lawmakers should focus on improving transparency, not making it worse.

Tell your lawmakers to prioritize transparency and keep these accountability measures. Please visit legislature.mi.gov to contact your elected leaders.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
CASS COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-047-DE
Hon. Judge Bealor

Court address Court telephone no.
60296 M-62,
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 445-4475

Estate of:
Kathleen Theresa O'Donnell

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Kathleen Theresa O'Donnell, died 07/22/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Brian O'Donnell, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 04/13/2026

Ryan W. Gardner P86200
Attorney name Bar no.
180 N. Stetson Ave., Ste 1400
Address
Chicago, IL 60601
City, state, zip
(312)456-3450
Telephone no.

Brian O'Donnell
Personal representative
925 W. Armitage Ave.
Address
Chicago, IL 60614
City, state, zip

2000 PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORY

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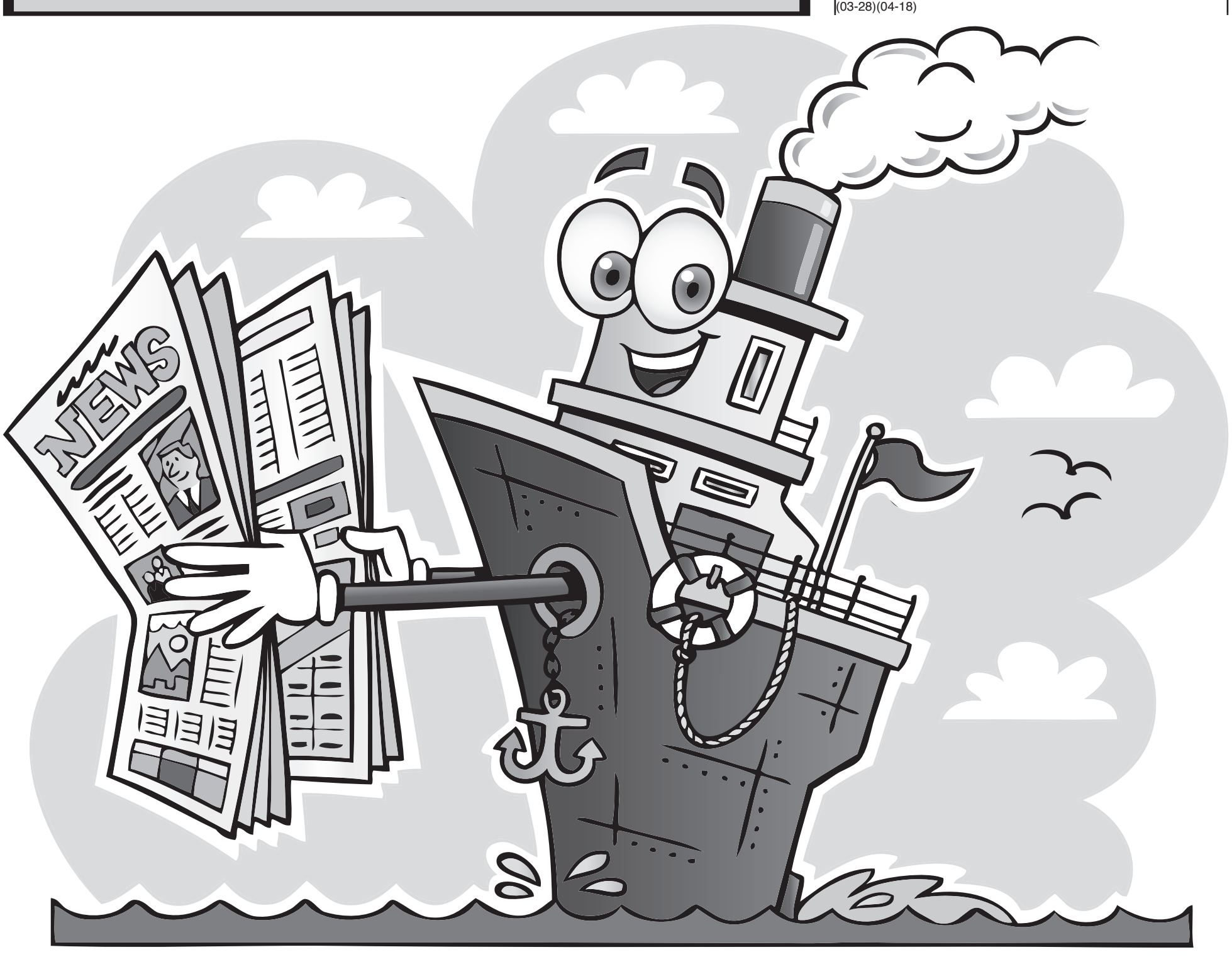
SAM SCHWARTZ
269-221-0159

SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - CASS COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on May 27, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Steven W. Robinson, unmarried Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), as mortgagee, for lender and lender`s successors and assigns Date of mortgage: February 28, 2012 Recorded on March 1, 2012, Liber 1037, on Page 2589, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): The Huntington National Bank Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Forty-Five Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Five and 88/100 Dollars ($45,845.88) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Cass County, and described as: Lot Numbered One Hundred Twenty-seven (127), Andrew Lester`s Addition to the City of Dowagiac, according to the plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, page 53, Cass County Records. Commonly known as 113 Bishop St, Dowagiac, MI 49047 The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The Huntington National Bank Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1590682 (04-18)(05-09)

FORECLOSURE NOTICE (ALL COUNTIES) AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement – Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM a.m./p.m. on April 29, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default having been made in the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage made by Robert L Saxton of Cass County, Michigan, Mortgagor to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan) dated the 19th day of September, 2013, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, on the 11th day of October, 2013, Liber 1067, Page 1885, of the Cass County Records on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, for principal of $31,137.87 plus accrued interest at 7.99000% percent per annum. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Township of LaGrange, in the County of Cass and State of Michigan and described as follows to wit: THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTH HALF OF LOT 14 AND THE WEST HALF OF LOT 15, EXCEPT THE SOUTH 1 ROD, BLOCK 1 SOUTH, RANGE 3 EAST, ORIGINAL PLAT, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDED PLAT THEREOF. ALSO THE WEST ONE-HALF OF LOT NUMBER 16; AND 1 ROD OFF THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE WEST ONE-HALF OF LOT NUMBER 15; ALL IN BLOCK 1 SOUTH, RANGE 3 EAST, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDED PLAT THEREO Commonly known as: 311 East Jefferson Street, Cassopolis, MI 49031 Tax ID: 14-041-115-015-00 If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale the borrower, pursuant to MCLA 600.3278 will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. The redemption period shall be six months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exception. Dated: March 28, 2026 By: Benjamin N. Hoen #P-81415 Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A. 5990 West Creek Road, Suite 200 Independence, OH 44131 Telephone: 216-739-5100 Fax: 216-363-4034 Email:bhoen@weltman.com WWR#: 26-000111-1 (03-28)(04-18)

Classifieds Make a Cash Connection!



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Moore gets probation for confrontation with woman

By LARRY LAGE and ED WHITE
Associated Press

ANN ARBOR — Former Michigan football coach Sherrone Moore was placed on probation Tuesday for 18 months for a confrontation with his executive assistant soon after he was fired for having an inappropriate relationship with her.

Moore was facing a possible sentence of up to six months in jail after pleading no contest to trespassing and malicious use of a telecom device. But Judge J. Cedric Simpson ordered no time in custody.

He said jail wasn't warranted, though he warned Moore that "all bets are off" if he violates probation. Simpson, too, said his decision was greatly influenced by the ex-coach's wife, Kelli.

Moore, 40, was fired on Dec. 10 after leading the Wolverines for two seasons, following Jim Harbaugh's move to the NFL's Los Angeles Chargers. It was a stunning dismissal at one of college football's most prestigious programs.

Moore was accused that same day of confronting Paige Shiver, with whom he had been having an affair, and blaming her for his firing, even threatening to kill himself with butter knives and kitchen scissors in her apartment. Authorities said she had ended the affair and spoken to school officials about it.

By ordering probation, "I would let Ms. Shiver know that this court is not by any means lessening the impact of those events," the judge said.

"Frankly, Mr. Moore, you had no right to do what you did," he added. "I know that she was placed in fear. It was a traumatic experience that day for you. It was certainly a traumatic experience for her. But you had no right to spread your pain to her."

Shiver did not attend the hearing but released a statement, saying the sentence "does not reflect the harm done to me."

"He broke into my apartment, crying, yelling, enraged, and came at me with knives. I was threatened, and I feared for my life," she said.

Moore was initially charged with felony home invasion, stalking and illegal entry. But Washtenaw County prosecutors agreed to a deal in which he pleaded no contest to two other misdemeanors.

Moore spoke briefly in court, thanking his wife for standing by him but not saying anything about Shiver. Defense lawyer Ellen Michaels told the judge that Moore had received counseling and was focused on his family.

The judge repeatedly praised Kelli Moore. Simpson said he was especially moved by a letter she wrote in support of her husband. He also noted that she was concerned about Moore's mental health when she calmly called police on the day of his firing in search of him.

"The person, quite frankly Mr. Moore, that is saving you from the full wrath of this court is the one you betrayed," Simpson said. "I don't know where your wife Kelli finds her strength."

Moore responded to the judge by nodding, while his wife's eyes welled with tears in the courtroom's front row.

The judge also cited the "courage" of prosecutors by backing off from the initial charges.

"When the charges were filed they were appropriate," Simpson said. "But as with any case, as more facts become known and as more things happen, the facts and the analysis change."

The plea deal came after Michaels planned to aggressively challenge how police gathered and shared information to get an arrest warrant.

Jacob Hamilton / Ann Arbor News

Former Michigan football coach Sherrone Moore appears in court in Pittsfield Township on Feb. 17.

She argued that police didn't disclose that Moore and Shiver had a working relationship that involved calls and text messages.

Moore did not harm himself on Dec. 10 and was peacefully arrested in a parking lot away from Shiver's apartment.

When the hearing ended, Moore leaned over a courtroom barrier and hugged his wife. Outside the courthouse, he held a Bible in one hand and her hand with the other.

"Sherrone is grateful for this matter to be resolved and he and his wife, Kelli, are ready to move forward with their family and focus on the next chapter," Michaels said.

EDITOR'S NOTE – This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org

Detroit on the clock: Leaders gearing up for 2027 Final Four

By TONY PAUL
The Detroit News (TNS)

It's been 3 ½ years since Detroit won the bid to host the 2027 Final Four. It was a day of celebration, back in November 2022, after years of the city trying — and failing – to convince the NCAA to bring college basketball's marquee event back to the city.

Not long ago, the 2027 Final Four seemed so far away. But now, make no mistake, the clock is very much ticking. Following Michigan's win in the national championship game last week, it's less than a year until the Final Four returns to Detroit for the first time since 2009.

Ford Field will host the Final Four on April 3 and 5, 2027. It's the latest major sporting event to set up shop in downtown Detroit, coming on the heels of Detroit's wildly successful turn hosting the 2024 NFL Draft.

"By and large for us, just like the NFL Draft, it's an opportunity to showcase and put the spotlight on Detroit and continue to change the narrative," Dave Beachnau, CEO of the Detroit local organizing committee for the 2027 Final Four, recently told The News. "We really knocked it out of the park with the draft.

"And we're expecting to do the same with the Final Four.

"There's just a lot of momentum."

More than 100,000 visitors are expected to flock to Detroit and the Metro Detroit areas for the 2027 Final Four, spurring nine figures in estimated economic impact.

Dozens of leaders from the city of Detroit and the 2027 Final Four local organizing committee recently returned from several days in Indianapolis, site of the 2026 Final Four, where they participated in a variety of roundtables, behind-the-scenes city and Lucas Oil Stadium walkthroughs and conversations with NCAA leadership in the leadup to the Motor City's star turn.

Beachnau, formerly executive director of the Detroit Sports Commission, which played a pivotal role in landing the 2027 Final Four, said he was struck by how much bigger an event the Final Four is than it was even 17 years ago.

"It's bigger and better," said Beachnau, "than it was in 2009."

The last time

APRIL 4, 2009: Michigan State d. Connecticut, 82-73 (attendance: 72,456)

APRIL 4, 2009: North Carolina d. Villanova, 83-69 (attendance: 72,456)

APRIL 6, 2009: North Carolina d. Michigan State, 89-72 (attendance: 72,922)

Beachnau was in Indianapolis for nearly a week, from Wednesday, April 1, through Tuesday, April 6, the morning after Michigan beat UConn, 69-63, to win its second national championship in men's basketball. Others who made the trip included Detroit mayor Mary Sheffield, as well as Detroit police chief Todd Bettison, who is serving as co-chair of the Detroit local organizing committee for the 2027 Final Four along with Nancy Tellem, the CEO and founder of BasBlue and wife of Pistons executive Arn Tellem.

Also making the trip to Indianapolis were representatives from Ford Field; Michigan State, the host university for the 2027 Final Four; and leadership and staff from the Detroit Sports Commission and Visit Detroit.

Beachnau came away very impressed with Indianapolis' hospitality – the city is a seasoned pro when it comes to hosting big sporting events, particularly at the college level – but also with plenty of ideas for how Detroit can and will make the event uniquely its own.

It won't just be "One Shining Moment." There should be lots and lots of shining moments.

"We're in a much better position than we were in, in 2009," said Beachnau, specifically noting the number of downtown Detroit hotel rooms, which has grown to about 6,000, from about 2,000 in 2009. "For us, we try to raise the bar every time we host an event. We'll be talking internally and looking very closely at what Indianapolis did, and where we might be able to improve the experience."

As uniquely as Detroit plans to make the 2027 Final Four, the NCAA still largely runs the show, and oversees most of the production, including several days of fan festivals and concerts. Beachanu also is racking his brain for a place to showcase a massive NCAA Tournament bracket, like the one the size of 12 basketball courts that adorned the side of the JW Marriott in downtown Indianapolis.

Future Final Four sites

- 2027: Ford Field, Detroit
- 2028: Allegiant Stadium, Las Vegas
- 2029: Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis
- 2030: AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas
- 2031: Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta

The NCAA has made several site visits to Detroit in the last several months, including last May, for a Ford Field walkthrough, and in September, for tipoff meetings. In December, leaders unveiled the 2027 Final Four logo, which features a basketball that could double as a record, a nod to Hitsville.

The NCAA, Beachnau said, will begin in June visiting Detroit every month, for two or three days at a time.

"It'll come fast," said Beachnau, whose committee got a taste of hosting the NCAA Tournament in 2024, when the Midwest Region was held at Little Caesars Arena. (LCA also will host a marquee Michigan State-Arkansas game this Thanksgiving, right after the Lions game at Ford Field.) "It's not crunch time, but the excitement's there."

Last week, local leaders unveiled the Fan Jam mobile promotional tour, starting at the Spirit of Detroit statue. Fan Jam is expected to visit each of Michigan's counties in the buildup to the 2027 Final Four. A bracket-style school reading competition is being launched. Applications for Final Four tickets (there will be two semifinals April 3 and the national-championship game April 5) opened in March and close at the end of May, with winners of the lottery being notified this fall. City leaders are actively working to sign up 2,500 volunteers, or more.

Michigan and Michigan State both are among the early favorites to get to the 2027 Final Four. So, while there's a lot of work on the plate of Beachnau and many others these days, with the countdown click ticking, he does occasionally allow himself fleeting moments to daydream about all the possibilities. He's not alone. Michigan State head coach Tom Izzo has talked about it. Even Michigan head coach Dusty May mentioned it, amid the Wolverines' post-game celebration in Indy.

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